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Population Decline in Montana

by
Patrick C. Jobes
Craig Wilson
William Wyckoff

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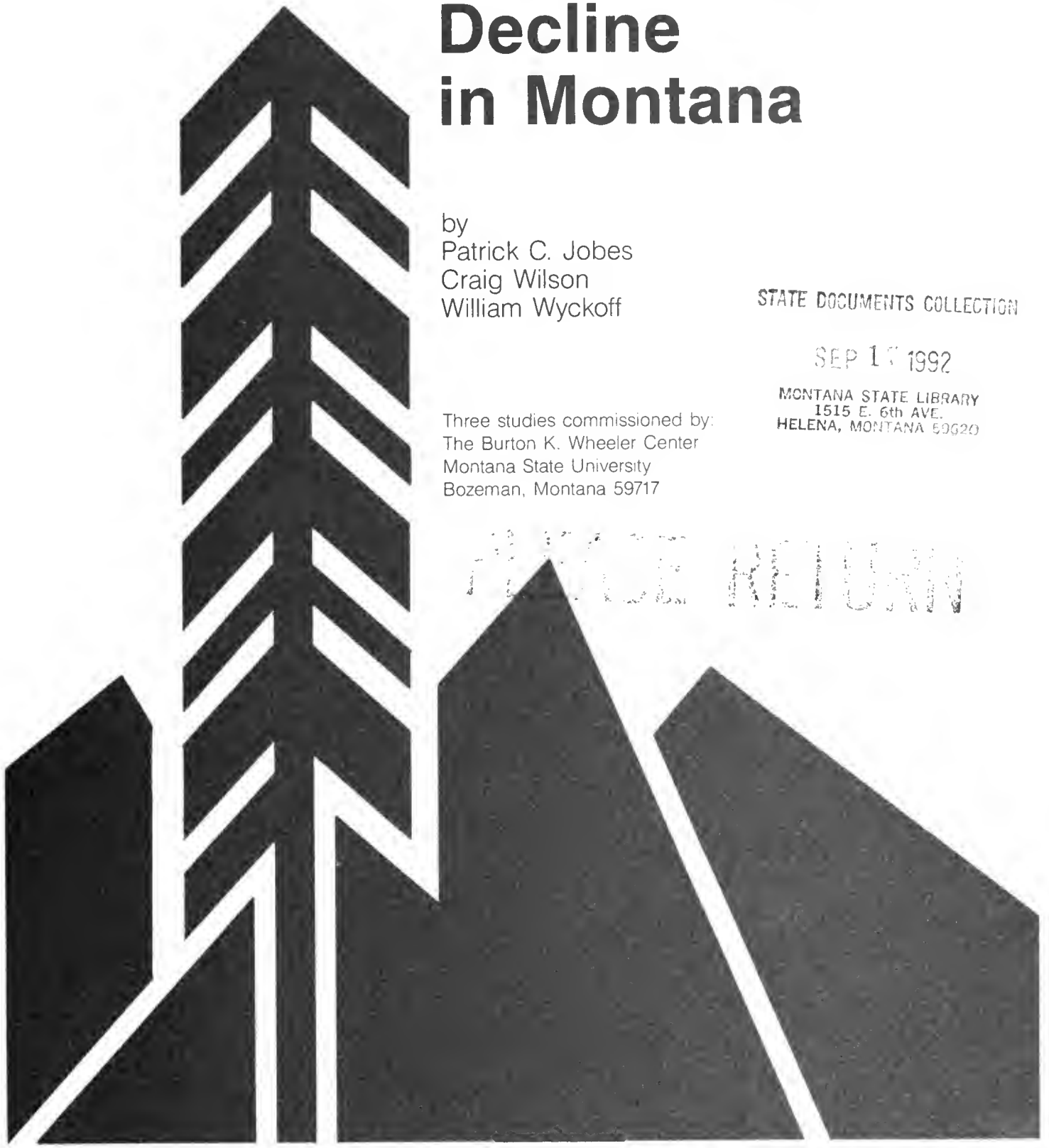

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POPULATION DECLINE IN MONTANA

by

Patrick C. Jobes, Craig Wilson and William Wyckoff

Three studies commissioned by

The Burton K. Wheeler Center
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

April 30 and May 1, 1991

FOREWORD

We are glad to make available the papers written for our 1991 Burton K. Wheeler Conference on *A Smaller Sky: the implications of population decline in Montana.* Patrick Jobes, Craig Wilson and William Wyckoff bring a variety of disciplinary perspectives and long experience studying population questions to this important question. Anyone interested in Montana's future will want to know what its historic population patterns have been, what the reasons for present in- and out-migration are, and what the political and social implications of the trend lines might be.

The Burton K. Wheeler Center of Montana State University is funded by the Greater Montana Foundation. We are grateful for its continuing support. The Center is dedicated to providing a forum for the full and balanced discussion of issues affecting the state and region.

All of the editorial work on this publication has been done by Bradley Snow, Junior Associate of the Wheeler Center. I am happy here to recognize the contribution he is making to Center activities.

Gordon G. Brittan, Jr.
Executive Director
Burton K. Wheeler Center
Montana State University

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Migration and Community in Montana

by
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Introduction

The social foundations for migration have been serious matters throughout most of human history (Forde 1963). Hunting and gathering societies survived by systematically changing locations. Sedentary agriculturists stayed put, gradually expanding their cultivated lands and sending excess population to cities. Industrial society transformed peasants into city dwellers. Now, in the post industrial era, migration has once again become a determinant in the way of life (DaVanzo 1976). Unlike their hunting and gathering ancestors, who maintained community by moving, modern society is dismantling and frequently destroying it (Wirth 1938; Nisbet 1966). However, like the Phoenix, community is resurrected in new, if incomplete and fragmented forms (Fischer 1982; Wellman 1979).

Community derives from the same root as commitment and communion (Funk and Wagnalls 1963). The word means to cut, to divide, to share with others in a locality. Migration is inseparable from community, commitment and communion. Each migrant leaves behind people in a place with whom something was shared while moving to another place with other people to share in some other way. Community is a fundamental human need. Humans need the identity and order of life that can only occur through close sharing with others (Bellah, et al 1985). Lacking these, life would be "solitary, poor(e), nasty, brutish, and short" (p. 186). More than mere self-protection through civility, as posited by Hobbes (1986), is the equally fundamental need for succor of the human spirit which can only be gained through community and communion.

America is a nation of movers. Founded by migrants, Americans have become increasingly migratory during the twentieth century (Long 1988). If in the past people typically changed the area in which they resided never, or once or twice in their adult lives, in the present they move several times or more. And, among the generalizations that can be made about migrants, residents of the Rocky Mountain West are near the extreme of the nation.

Thinking and writing about communities is very different from living in them. Sociologists need only identify social structures and processes explaining how the system works. Residents living in the more complicated, sloppy and imprecise reality of their communities participate in a much more complex process. Migration as a concept refers to an often obvious and mundane behavior which is frequently so taken for granted, that neither its magnitude nor its impacts are understood. If, as Claude Levi-Strauss (1961) maintained, the object of social science is to demystify, the goal here is to elevate this dormant concept to a higher level of attention so that it is more than taken for granted.

The questions asked most about migration are what are its implications for politics and employment (DeJong 1988). This paper examines a broader process of what migration means for the individual and the community, beyond the issues of political representation and the bottom line, itself a cynical denial of the importance of the lines above it. While important, addressing these issues may neglect more subtle and dynamic processes.

My object is to interpret the meaning of migration in the northern Rocky Mountains during the last three decades. The orientation derives from the perception

Note: *The author gratefully acknowledges the support provided by Gordon Britton and the Burton K. Wheeler Center for encouragement and support in preparing this presentation. He also thanks Diane Fuhrman for her patient secretarial assistance and Bradley Snow for his editorial suggestions.*

of the actors, as social theorists refer to people, rather than that of the author. This paper constitutes an attempt to passively report and interpret within a sociological perspective (Garfinkle 1976, Goffman 1959, Parsons 1951). The observations are drawn from data collected over the past twenty years of research in addition to my familiarity with work of others. The focus will be upon the influence of migration on communities in popular scenic and recreation areas in southwestern Montana.

American Migration in Historical and National Context

Humans are a restless lot. The course of history is largely one of people attempting to obtain what they think they want. Americans are somewhat unique in their propensity for seeking what they think they want by changing locations, hoping to find their goal at the base of a distant rainbow (Friedman 1972). Two qualities somewhat unique to modern industrial nations characterize their loose-footedness. America was founded by migrants motivated by goal seeking, sometimes for freedom, usually for profit and both pursuits involving changing locations. America is a vast land imposing long distances between origins and destinations. Today as in the past these qualities impose special consequences on the residents of both the places of new residence and the places left behind.

These generalizations obviate the facts that black migration was largely forced slavery (Mannx 1962). The consequences of settlement were to displace and eradicate the indigenous population. While such examples disprove the syllogism that migration in America is both free and good, the belief is a shibboleth (Merelman 1984). The primary metaphor for life in the United States is laissez faire capitalism. Free migration, the right, indeed the expectation, for citizens to move to a location of optimal employment, is implied in the, ". . . pursuit of happiness." More important than the opportunity to move is the mind-set, the perspective, upon which moving to acquire happiness is founded. Americans believe in self satisfaction through individual achievement, first. The foundation for this happiness is through the security of work and the prosperity of income gained independently through competition (Rabushka 1985). It matters little that the lives of individuals show minimal association between happiness and income, the belief guides the thoughts and behaviors in materialistic societies (Andrews and Withey 1976). While material well-being is necessary for satisfaction it is hardly sufficient, though it often is treated as if it were both. While the United States is the extreme personification of laissez-faire materialism, other nations also share less extreme visions. However, when coupled with the enormous geographic dimensions of the United States, the unique qualities of migration in this country become extreme.

Many other European and Asian countries practice industrial capitalism, sharing similar though less extreme laissez-faire visions with the United States. However, when a German, an Englishman, or a Japanese decides to migrate to find work and the life that accompanies the move, they move within geographic boundaries equivalent to a large American county (Long, et al 1988). Immediate community of residence may change, but accessibility to family, and friends usually remains a matter of a short drive. In the United States distant moves are far more common (Cushing 1986.) The orientation to seek the good life through migration combined with geographic distances makes most communities in the United States transient and uncommitted places. Communities in the mainstreams of migration are unlikely to provide sustained personal interaction and social cohesion.

The analysis of migration, therefore, frequently is a study of community or lack thereof. Some groups retain community in the very act of migrating. Gypsies, and migrant laborers for whom migration is a way of life, travel with their own communities (Esty 1969). During the massive European migration entire Anabaptist communities, often led by the local minister, relocated to America (Hostetler and Huntington 1967). Immigrants frequently moved back and forth between ethnic communities with the same language, similar customs and relatives. These patterns of mass and cyclical migration persist among contemporary immigrants from South America and Asia (Chapman and Prothero 1985).

Examples of community being preserved in spite of its members moving are not uncommon. In post-industrial society migration commonly wrests residents from one place where they were marginally involved with local institutions and locates them in another place where they are similarly involved. Admittedly, some persons remain actively engaged wherever they are, moving excitedly from one place to another. While active, they may never become community members in a traditional sense before moving on.

American migration is an extreme form in which people replace the familiar, the old, that seemed to cause dissatisfaction. The throw-away society facilely disposes of dishes and utensils, automobiles, spouses and communities, the chaff and the grain, as matters of life style (Baumgartner 1988; Center for Investigative Reporting 1990). Inconvenience and fashion seem to determine

dissatisfaction as if they were genuinely functional. Moderate dissatisfaction implies something is wrong and can be replaced; at another fast food restaurant down the road, by another car that will exceed the speed limit by even more than the last one, by another spouse with frailties, and by another magical place with promising illusions.

The implicit criticism here of the throw-away society might be interpreted as cynicism were it not empirically accurate. Nor should it be taken to mean that exchanging old for new, tattered for smooth, is unwarranted. The disintegration of modern society indeed may have allowed the physical collapse of unacceptably dismal places. And many individuals, similarly, may have become miserable beyond their limits of toleration. However, the almost oblivious willingness to seek satisfaction by continually ridding the familiar for the novel is destructive of whatever legacy may have been established. This habitual behavior is wasteful of energy and resources which are consumed by the continual creation of the new and the mediocre.

Community and Migration

Two important dimensions are pertinent to the preceding discussion. The first, degree of personal integration between the migrant and the residents at the new location, is implied through the examples of migrants retaining community even during the process of moving. This is communion; having special, intimate interaction with others. At the other extreme of this continuum is the isolated loner, moving from place to place never becoming part of any group. Between these polar extremes are the mass migrations in which community is reformed with a new set of people and with a composite of cultural qualities roughly characteristic of a nationality. An example would be the formation of an Italian community composed of rural and urban northern and southern Italians. While certainly not a historically preserved community, the interaction and social organization may evolve into a tightly knit group of families enmeshed through work, religion, neighborhood, schools, intermarriage and so forth. Providing that residents remain in the same location for a few decades, the community may well become as tight as is likely to be found in industrial society (Gans 1982).

The most typical migration in late industrial and post industrial society occurs among residents who share the vague ubiquitous culture of America. Their residential locations are so loosely tied together that they hardly merit the term "community." They move often, usually finding others similar enough to themselves to become a part of a network. They may act together but in limited communion. America, historically composed of ethnic minorities and rural towns, had a treasure of communities in which residents were relatively integrated and committed (de Tocqueville 1969). One of the crucial problems of contemporary society is how to adapt to their loss.

The second dimension in community is commitment, a combination of being and doing (Scott 1971). Being pertains to believing and acting as a community member. Residents believe themselves to be community members based upon criteria shared by the collective. Being a part of a community means being one of the people, using the institutions, following the local rules and largely believing in them. Community members endorse and act in them and accept idiosyncratic nonconformity. Being involves more than a style of life, though style certainly may solidify communities and identify them to others.

Being a community member can only occur in a community. Communities can only occur when residents remain together for a long enough period to form a common identity by sharing institutions and norms. This fact creates a dilemma in industrial America because the places where most Americans live have so few elements essential for community. However effectively towns and cities may function, most offer an unravelling web of personal commitment. Doing, by itself, is neither enough to create community nor to be a part of it. Participation in appropriate activities is essential, however, to be part of a community. If residents remain in the same place with the same people developing institutions and establishing common values, a community will emerge.

There are exceptions and qualifications which apply to the general rule of community formation. If an already existing sense of identity or prejudice exists, residents may resist sharing their community with others. Community members in effect deny the being of others. Non-local women married to ranchers who grew up in the isolated area where they now live have reported never feeling part of the community even after twenty or thirty years (Jobes 1986). They feel this way in spite of having participated actively in church, school and organizations. They lack the common experience of having grown up there. More tragically, clan and tribal peoples may exclude outsiders for centuries. Certainly the exclusion of racial minorities is a historical blemish on the United States which has fragmented communities through migration (Stack 1987).

A Sociological Perspective on Migration

The assumption guiding this paper is that people are motivated to search for conditions they think will make

them feel better—to be more satisfied. Free migration involves an attempt to increase satisfaction by relocating to a place which is imagined to have the most satisfactory condition migrants can obtain. Rather than look within themselves and attempt to modify their perspective on where they live, migrants retain their perspective and move to another place with the qualities they perceive will bring satisfaction.

The perspective of a migrant may accurately describe the factors that will bring satisfaction following a move. When a migrant's perspective is in error, the migrant is left with several alternatives. A common choice is to move to still another location, trying to match the elusive conditions with the perspective. In the Gallatin Valley approximately eighty percent of the residents move every decade (Jobes forthcoming). Another frequent choice is to stay in spite of the realization that the new place lacks what was being sought. Moving is tiring, expensive and demanding. It merits pause to reconsider whether repeating the ordeal is warranted, even for the most attractive fantasies. A third possibility is to change the perspective itself.

Changing a perception is a complex process. While it may occur through conscious effort more frequently it probably occurs, "just like Topsy," despite any amount of consideration (Shaw 1988). Persons gradually realize life in their new community is satisfying despite an equally clear realization that the qualities they initially believed were important for their moving there are not so important, if, indeed, they are even present. Wives who begrudgingly accompany their husbands to southwestern Montana often dislike the area shortly after their move. Their husbands, on the other hand, generally report high initial satisfaction, as they experience the outdoor recreation of their dreams. Three or four years later the perspectives often shift. The wives develop friends, find work, and become involved in voluntary associations. They experience community and like it, despite long winters and limited shopping and cultural experiences. By then, the husbands are generally less enthusiastic about the recreational activities that attracted them, and are often at a loss about how to find satisfaction.

Underlying this example is the search for satisfaction through external conditions. However important external conditions may be, they are only one aspect of satisfaction. The connection made with others, as friends, neighbors, colleagues, families, and as genuine human beings; that is the foundation for community.

The metaphor guiding migrants is that something physical and beyond themselves can bring them greater satisfaction. The metaphor is of hunger, a hunger for place that fulfills the human void. In its most extended form the hunger is for home, a personal space in a familiar community which satisfactorily provides for the needs of oneself and one's loved ones. In the sparsest and most dysfunctional cases the hunger may be sated by substances like food, drugs and alcohol or activities like athletics, sex and work. Such substances or activities may bring temporary relief. They also limit attention paid to other activities, and more crucially, to other people. Loved ones and community members expect responsiveness and participation. Consuming activities and substances prevent being responsive to others, leaving broader needs unfulfilled. Focused persons as well as those around them remain unsatisfied—hungry for something beyond what they have—and ready to move on.

The continual cycle of dissatisfaction-migration-dissatisfaction may be a fact of humanity, a perverse trick evolved in the competition to survive. Whatever the source, the dysfunction between what Americans in the final decades of the Twentieth Century want and what they are finding is accelerating. They are moving more frequently than any time in history (Bogue 1985).

The facts of restlessness and rapid migration in and of themselves might be merely interesting phenomena distinguishing modern America from other places and earlier times were the consequences of this uprooting less destructive. Moving tears apart people and community. At the most extreme edge of this phenomenon are gradually declining rural places with disintegrating structures and demoralized residents, rueing for lost family and more prosperous times. Even when there is growth; as in instant suburbs where the infrastructure is new, efficient and operated by some magical social machinery, people frequently don't know their neighbors and social disorganization is rampant.

The Contrast Between Social and Economic Explanations

Whether people move primarily for economic reasons or for reasons of quality of life is among the most volatile and recurrent issues in the analysis of migration. This dichotomy implies that one type of choice excludes the other. Both sides of the issue empirically demonstrate that theirs is a valid interpretation. Distinguishing quality of life from economic gain sometimes is difficult. One person's greedy motives may be essential for the quality of life of another. Opera boxes, second homes and cruises don't come cheap.

The argument is central to this paper because it pits rational economic man theory in its popularized late twentieth century form against other explanations (Att-

field et al. 1985; Heap 1989). As will become evident, women are welcome in the theory if they wish to identify with what passes as rational. Following the rhetoric of the 1980's, rational economic decision making implied allowing employment and income to determine other activities, rather than the other way around. Quality of life theorists, on the other hand, maintained that migrants often moved to find recreation, safety, and environmental purity in small towns with many natural amenities, and to be with family and friends. The former perspective advocates feeding the hunger by a single accomplishment, income, which presumably can feed whatever appetites one may have. The latter maintains that the fundamental appetites, themselves, are more primal.

Both theoretical perspectives are simultaneously correct and insufficient. People move to obtain both money and life quality. More precisely, some move almost exclusively to make money, others almost exclusively for quality of life reasons and most to gain a bit of each. People often switch motives from one to the other. The longer they live in a place, the more mixed their motives generally become. They may become simultaneously attracted and repulsed by both economic and noneconomic reasons that are the reverse of what they once held dear.

For example, recent male migrants provide a litany of responsible economic considerations they made prior to moving, which in retrospect they find naive, ignorant and erroneous despite their best original intentions. They may not be aware of them as such. Most blame the problems on the characteristics of their new community rather than on their mistaken expectations. Those who remain often readjust their priorities (Williams et al 1986).

Residents who remain will be those whose mental calculus tells them they have enough of whatever dimensions they define as important. Those motivated by earnings and costs are satisfied enough with their balance to stay. Those motivated by small town ambience, track-free powder runs, presence of family and the infinite variety of other quality of life considerations also stay if they are satisfied. If they don't have enough to satisfy, they think about leaving. They consider where to go, whether there are other places which have more of what they think they want than what they presently have.

Economically rational people have some advantages over those motivated by life quality. There are many choices of places to earn more or spend less available to them as a category. There are relatively few places with more relatives or natural recreation resources with few users which are relevant to people seeking such personal qualities. Realistically, economic alternatives may be limited, so particular individuals cannot expect to earn more than where they are, given real estate considerations, education costs, and the myriad details that plague economic man. More realistically, even if economic opportunities exist, there are any number of noneconomic considerations to be taken into account. These, of course, will only cross the minds of quality of life motivated people. They would not occur to rational economic people who think first and foremost of economic advantage and relegate other considerations to afterthoughts.

Economically rational people enjoy these advantages over their quality of life counterparts in the number of alternatives they have for places where they may move to maximize their satisfaction. Conversely, they are faced with a perspective that continually notifies them that they can have more if they will move again, and again, and. . .again. Their means of satisfying the hunger stimulates the appetite. Meanwhile, the quality of life residents may, just may, stay and build a cohesive community in spite of their insatiable peers, who, like Eliot's people, ". . .come and go, speaking of Michelangelo," as an investment, of course (1971).

Economic and quality of life theories are simultaneously correct and inadequate, because they are subsets of a single and more fundamental variable. The motives of economic well-being or quality of life are different contents around the same form, to use the terminology of George Simmel (1964). Both are real in the sense of being tangible, observable, and measurable. Within American Society the easy quantification of economics is believed to be the demonstrably more real of the two concepts as is indicated by such phrases as, "real estate," and "the bottom line." Still, not all Americans, perhaps not even many, are automatons for whom the sacred, the qualitative non-economic, are valueless.

The fundamental value preceding economics or quality of life is the sacred, the notion of value itself (Durkheim 1954). The sacred is the gnawing hunger to be fed, the hollow mannequin to be dressed. The sacred is the unknowable to be known, and by increasing convention it is to be filled by material things and by a rational motivational system for obtaining them. For those who choose family, or community, or nature, the answer is in another dimension.

All that has been said so far addresses matters as if migrants could be classified as being consistent in their orientation, economic or noneconomic. Reality being broader than theory, they cannot be, because they are

not consistent. They change. Migrants, residents and scientists analyzing migrants generally share the common perspective that economic considerations are the primary reason for moving. (The rote question and answer suggested by demographers, residents and migrants to the frequent migration out of Montana are, "Did they move because they couldn't earn enough?" and "They moved to improve their employment situation.") The implication, often correct, is that the economic perspective is primary in the decisions of migrants. Many migrants believe and bolster this perspective. Men, particularly, say they have considered employment and income before moving. While they say they act like economic men, most discover they were delusioned. Most imagined how they might capitalize within their new communities while lacking much insight into the difficulties of finding or creating acceptable employment in the new area (Williams et al 1986).

The failure of migrants to accurately anticipate dismal job prospects is not sufficient fact to totally reject economic explanations. Perhaps migrants are merely inept in their calculations. To err is human, even for rational economic man. There is yet another reason for being suspicious of the economic model. The model assumes that given opportunities, those who are poor will be more likely to move than will the rich because they stand to gain relatively more in the process. The history of pockets of poverty, like Appalachia, the Ozarks, and the southern Rocky Mountains indicates that large numbers of poor people stay put because of social factors rather than move for the opportunity to earn more (O'Hare 1985). Even when they move, these people often join relatives in replicas of the home community (Schwartzweller et al 1971).

Rich people in the Gallatin Valley are less likely to move away than are poor people, which supports the economic perspective. Many low income people however, remain in spite of the almost assured opportunity to earn more elsewhere. Additionally, middle income earners are more likely to stay than are those who earn less or more than they do, implying that not only are individuals erroneously calculating their economics, they also are basing decisions on noneconomic consideration (Jobes forthcoming). The fact that many do not seek to improve their economic status as they choose low or moderate incomes because of noneconomic preferences indicates one of three possibilities: economic man does not do very well what he is assumed to do; he must not be intelligent enough to understand the model; he must be irrational, putting him into a category suitable for study by psychiatrists rather than economists; or, he must be incorporating social variables into his decision making which are conceptually independent, yet interact with economic variables. In any case, people do not seem to conform to the model however much they and those explaining their behavior think they should.

The Social Consequences of Mistaken Migration Perspectives

The emphasis throughout the foregoing comments has been on individual migrants. The consequences of migration are also felt by those close to the migrants, their families, friends and neighbors in their communities of origin, and where they move. Responsibility has increasingly taken on the connotation of paying for something. This is a narrow meaning for a word that literally means, "the ability to respond." While earning one's way is important, it is not sufficient to create community and help provide for the rich and diverse qualities beyond economic costs.

The author has studied a small government-based community in the northern Rocky Mountains which has high incomes, relatively effective housing and other services for a rural town, and in which there is no unemployment. The community has these and is located in a beautiful setting. Yet, a high proportion of the residents, and especially the successful upwardly-mobile administrators and their spouses, are unhappy. The initial and most obvious explanations for their misery are related to housing and to difficulties related to employment. Further investigation has indicated that however unsatisfactory these conditions may be, they are only part of the problem. The miserable residents generally lack close friends. The most salient fact is that they do not feel part of and do not wish to be part of the community. In time some of them will join groups and begin to participate. More tellingly, most will transfer to another assignment having scarcely responded to others in the context of community. In many respects the social system is similar to instant suburbs in which roads, schools, utilities and elections occur with order and efficiency. Taxes systematically are withheld, bills are paid and votes are cast with scarcely a need to talk to a neighbor or participate in a fundamental community activity.

These are benign examples of the negative consequences of migration on communities. Nevertheless, they indicate economic and social well being, the goals of economic and quality of life migration, are separate dimensions. Boom towns which lack services as well as community participation can be malignant cases of social disintegration brought on by migration even

when prosperous. Communities which existed before the onslaught of development may disintegrate and suffer greatly with the influx of large numbers of unfamiliar and often unruly migrants. They suffer again during the inevitable bust. Unquestioning faith in economic rationality and migration often neglects the loss of life quality (Krannich et al 1985).

Most communities do not suffer the intensity of migration-caused problems experienced by these extreme examples. Even in the most ideal circumstances migrants have problems of adjusting to and becoming part of the community. Beyond the inevitable difficulties of forming friendships and becoming compatible with colleagues and neighbors, migrants may also be sufficiently different as to be regarded as deviant from the perspective of the community. They are more likely to be vagrants, lawbreakers, require welfare assitance and to be mentally ill (Sanua, 1970). These problems require direct response by local institutions. They may be carrying ideas commonplace in their prior locations, but unacceptable to their new homes. Such divergences run the gamut of beliefs and behaviors. For example, the migrants may consume significantly more energy resources than home town residents (Fuguitt et al 1991). Environmental, religious and gender related issues are especially volatile, particularly when they become debated in local schools, government and churches (Schwartzweller 1979). In these confrontations the newcomers are the agents of change (Ploch 1981). They nevertheless may constitute a problem from the perspective of the existing community, however moral and ethical the issue position may be. On the other hand, newcomers, when they are consciously involved community members contribute innovative ideas and behaviors to the place.

Conclusion

Montana appears to have lost a Congressional seat because of its sparse population. This occurence, more than any other, was responsible for initiating this forum. In addition to raising questions and fears concerning what the political implications of that loss might be, the loss generated an interest in what other effects might be brought about by migration into and out of Montana and the region.

The initial concern, the loss of a representative to Congress, is the easier to address. The loss, obviously, means a spokesperson for Montanans has been lost. This means there is one less representative for residents to vent their spleen to; one less person to personally express concern for and organize around the issues troubling Montanans. It probably means one less vote for the NRA. More importantly, the loss means one less representative for rural agricultural and national environmental interests. The loss of one representative in a voting body of 435 is minimal, certainly incommensurate to the loss of pride. There is irony that an action at the national level of politics provided an impetus for the interest in migration among Montanans. The primary concern of residents of mass society is what Robert Bellah (op. cit.) refers to as The Politics of the Nation. It is at this level that residents articulate the loftiest of principles, which often have precious little to do with what actually gets done in the community. The focus upon the loss of a seat at the national level of politics in this instance has generated an occassion to examine some local implications of what led to the loss. It is an example of how rapidly migrating and disconnected residents and even permanent residents pay attention to what is beyond them in lieu of recognizing what is around them. The reality is that the local community is consistently effected by migration, a process that rarely catches the attention of politicians or residents except during the most extreme and unusual events, such as an inmigrating New Age religious commune, the development of a large mine, or the loss of a congressional seat.

Rapid in and outmigration creates a structure of leadership composed of the small minority of residents who remain in the community. Familiar names are especially marketable, sometimes incidental to qualifications. Local politics becomes an activity of an established organization which responds to those with enough knowledge or power to influence it. This leaves a relatively small and nonrepresentative actual constituency because so few of the residents know much about the place, the issues or the candidates. This leaves practical local political decisions, like land use planning and schools, to be settled largely by powerful or unrepresentative local interests, what Bellah refers to as the Politics of Interest.

Democratic action in the community requires knowledgeable action by residents. Most of the knowledge is idiosyncratic and specific, the kind of information that comes from living in the same place and dealing with the same issues and the same people year after year. This is the Politics of Community. It is this level of politics which disappears with high migration, leaving local decision making to a few powerful interest groups. National political involvement becomes a symbolic gesture which solely attracts the participation of most voters. This is the omnipresent and insidious effect of rapid migration eroding community and undermining knowledgeable local political participation. It is the same process which makes Montana ripe for

manipulation by extra-local interests.

A final question, which follows from this excursis about migration in Montana, is what can be expected for the future? Rational economic and quality of life considerations will continue to determine the future as they explain the present. Clairvoyance of how they will operate is a matter of wisdom, divine guidance and luck, each in short supply.

Rural agricultural Montana will scarcely retain the population it currently has. Land consolidation, mechanical efficiency and economic domination make the decline in agricultural population inevitable for the next generation or so. The local provision for goods and services and the informal social support will continue to disintegrate. There will be rare exceptions. Mining will encourage growth as resources are developed. Coal and precious metals promise to be pillaged more because of national profit taking than for long term state and local community interest. Scenic and recreational rural areas will continue to grow. The average economic well-being will remain generally low for most residents, except for those who profit from the rest, especially from those temporary newcomers who spend their nest egg in the process. The communities will increasingly resemble the networks of suburbs rather than the more genuine communities of rural agricultural areas. Genuinely agricultural areas lack social and aesthetic amenities or the economic base to attract or retain residents. Scenic recreation areas are easily exploitable by outside wealth, which provides little sustained community participation. Mining attracts more committed residents, who suffer when the resource plays out.

The delusion of economic rationality will continue to attract residents. Renewable food and fiber resources will provide spurts and flashes with busts lasting longer than the booms. Profits from the exploitation of nonrenewable resources will continue to leave the state. Scenic and recreational resources will be developed to levels demanding such extensive management that the revered concept, the "natural," will scarcely be applicable (Calvert and Jobes 1990). Most people will only vaguely notice this process because the conditions upon their own arrival will provide the reference point for evaluating changes around them. They will not have seen the area in its less exploited, more natural, state. So long as it is relatively less crowded and safer, prettier and cleaner than where they came from, Montana will seem pretty attractive. And for the foreseeable future the relative solitude and beauty of the northern Rockies are likely to create the delusion among migrants that they convey more than most other places in America.

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Three Faces of Political Change in Montana: Gender, Generation and Population Movement

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Introduction

In many respects, Montana's 1991 political world is very different from that which prevailed during the early years of this century. For example, in his memoirs, *Yankee From the West,* former U.S. Senator Burton K. Wheeler noted that in 1910 in his home town of Butte, the major political conflicts concerned winning the Democratic nominations for various offices at the county convention. While today a Democratic party nomination still remains tantamount to election in Butte-Silver Bow, contemporary campaign tactics are different. Wheeler wrote that: "To win the Democratic nomination, it was best to claim nativity in County Cook and second best to claim birth in some [other] county in Ireland with slightly lesser prestige in Montana."[1] Referring to his 1910 race for the state legislature on the Democratic ticket, Wheeler wrote:

> The prescription for a successful campaign was simplicity itself: you planted a foot on the bar rail and bought 'drinks for the house' in every saloon and casino in Silver Bow County and as often as possible. Since there was no paper money in Montana then, you tossed out a fistful of silver or, better yet, a five, ten, or twenty-dollar gold piece. And if you expected change you could have stood there until doomsday without getting any.[2]

But changes in the colorful campaign tactics of the past are not the concern here. Rather, this article focuses on how certain demographic characteristics of Montana's population, in terms of gender, generation, and shifts in population, are reflected in the changing composition of the legislature and in the political attitudes of the state's citizens. In recent years, some political aspects of these variables have changed, others are evolving, and some remain the same. First, however, the historic political tendencies should be noted.

The 1990 General Election and Montana's Historic Political Tendencies

Montana's 1990 primary and general elections generally proved to be dull affairs. Despite some impassioned rhetoric, none of the major races provided much "electoral spice." Several ballot issues provided almost as much excitement as did the statewide contests. But however dull these elections may have been, the results again demonstrated many of Montana's historic political tendencies.[3]

At first glance, Montana appears to have a fragmented political system. Its voters are notorious ticket splitters who often elect conservatives from both parties at the state level, while choosing liberals to represent them in Washington, especially in the Senate. While the state has traditionally exhibited relatively high levels of interparty competition, personalities have often been more important than party affiliation in attaining electoral office.

Despite these political idiosyncracies, certain historic patterns are discernible. The Montana electorate has generally served as a political weathervane in presidential politics; in only three instances during the twentieth century (1900, 1960, and 1976) has the state not supported the winning candidate. In 1964, Barry Goldwater was the last Republican nominee to lose Montana.

Since the time that U.S. senators have been selected by popular vote rather than by the state legislators, Montana has elected only two Republicans: Zales Ecton, who served one term from 1946-1952, and Conrad Burns, who was elected in 1988. In 1990, the state's Democratic U.S. Senator, Max Baucus, won a landslide victory of historic proportions. In the post-World War II period, Democrats have normally won in the western congressional district, while Republicans usually have carried

the more conservative and agriculturally oriented eastern district. This tendency was upheld as Democrat Pat Williams and Republican Ron Marlenee were both re-elected to the U.S. House by landslide margins.

Since the end of World War II, the state has elected Democratic governors six times and Republicans five times. Although there have been many close races, incumbents have proved difficult to unseat.

During the post-World War II period, the legislature has also normally reflected a high level of inter-party competition. In terms of sessions, control of the House and Senate have been fairly evenly divided between the two parties, with the Democrats maintaining a slight advantage: Democrats controlled the House 12 times to the Republicans' 10 times with an even split for one session. The comparative figures for the Senate are 12-9-2.[4] In 1990, the Democrats increased the size of their majority in the House to 61-39 and recaptured majority control of the upper chamber by a 29-21 margin. These Democratic majorities marked the first time that a single party controlled both chambers of the legislature in ten years. In only four of the 23 regular legislative sessions held since 1947 has the same party controlled both legislative houses as well as the governor's office. One of the most significant aspects of the 1990 legislative contests was that the net gain of 15 seats for the Democrats, (six in the Senate and nine in the House), represented the greatest swing from one party to another, both in terms of numbers and as a percentage of total seats, of any state legislature in the country.[5]

Beneath the surface of the 1990 election, however, demographic changes in terms of gender, generational factors, stagnant population growth and population shifts, continued to reshape Montana's political landscape. As was true throughout the 1980's, increasing numbers of women were elected to the legislature. Members of the baby-boom generation continued to replace state legislators born in the pre-Depression era and approached the number of solons born during the Depression or World War II. To some extent, these changes in the gender and generational makeup of the legislature have been reflected in the political attitudes of the electorate. Further, the 1991-1992 process of reapportionment and redistricting will increasingly shift legislative seats from eastern to western Montana and from rural to urban areas. Finally, Montana's low population growth will possibly lead to the reduction in the state's U.S. House seats from two to one.

Women and Montana Politics

In territorial days Montana women held the right to vote in school elections and on tax levies if they were property owners; but they lost this limited franchise when Montana gained statehood. During Montana's Constitutional Convention in 1889, delegates decided against granting women the right to vote in part due to fears that men might vote against the document.

In the 1890's suffragettes struggled, but failed, to achieve the right to vote. While the Populist Party endorsed the concept, the movement nonetheless lost political momentum. In the early 1900's during the Progressive era, suffragettes abandoned arguments about equality and began to stress women's moral and social superiority. One such argument is quoted in Michael Malone's and Richard Roeder's *Montana: A History of Two Centuries:*

> Now, it is woman, only woman. . .who can rescue poor, indiscreet and misguided man and lift him to the height above the seething, rotten condition into which he has gotten himself.[6]

In the early 1900's Jeanette Rankin became a leader of the suffragettes. In 1911, legislation was introduced in the Montana legislature calling for a constitutional referendum on the issue. Burton K. Wheeler, who was serving in the legislature at the time, noted in his memoirs that Jeanette Rankin lobbied the legislature to ratify the measure and that he decided "to have a little fun with it" by proposing to amend "the Amendment so as to limit the right to vote to women with six children." Wheeler ultimately voted in favor of the measure and concluded: "I strongly believe women should not only vote but also run for public office."[7]

The 1912 platforms of both major parties backed womens' suffrage. The 1913 legislature endorsed a constitutional amendment referendum which was voted upon in the 1914 general election and adopted with 52.2% of the vote. The amendment simply deleted the word "male" from the constitutional article outlining the requirements for suffrage. The amendment was supported by up to 70% of the northwestern counties as well as by Yellowstone County and several others. The strongest opposition came from the southwestern mining areas and several northeast counties.[8] With adoption of the amendment Montana women gained the right to vote prior to the ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920.

Women made their impact known in the first Montana general election (1916) in which they participated. For example, the number of Montanans voting for president in 1916 almost doubled those who had voted for this office in 1912. Part of the increase, however, was probably due to population growth as well as to the fact that the issue of liquor prohibition was also on the 1916

ballot, the issue which attracted more votes than were tallied for any single office.[9] In 1916, women helped elect Jeanette Rankin, the first woman chosen for the U.S. House of Representatives—and possibly the first woman popularly elected to any national legislative body in the world. A woman was also elected state superintendent of public instruction and two women won seats in the Montana House of Representatives: Republican Emma Ingalls from Flathead County, and Democrat Maggie Smith Hathaway from Ravalli County.

From territorial days through the 1991 legislative session, 3118 individuals have served in Montana's legislature. Ninety-six (3.1%) have been women, and of these, 65 were Democrats (67.7%) and 31 Republicans (32.3%). More women (thirteen) have been elected from Cascade County than from any other, followed by 9 from Missoula County.[10] More than 50% of all women legislators have been elected since 1979.

Nationally, the number of women legislators increased from 4.7% in 1971 to 16.9% in 1989. In 1989, 59% of all women legislators were Democrats and 41% Republican.[11] The growth in the number of women in the Montana legislature mirrored this increase, although Montana generally lagged slightly behind the national average until 1989. The 31 women serving in the 1991 Montana legislature for the first time pushed the percentage of women solons above 20% (20.7%).

In the 1990 general election seven women ran for the state Senate (five Democrats and two Republicans).[12] All the women stood in contested races; four won and three lost, although two Republican women lost to female Democratic candidates. When holdover seats are included, eight women Senators (seven Democrats and one Republican) were in the 1991 Senate, an increase of two over the six who served in 1989.

In House contests, 38 women candidates ran in 34 races. Five women ran for uncontested seats (three Democrats and two Republicans) and women opposed each other in four races. Thus, there were 33 women candidates entered in 29 contested races (23 Democrats and 10 Republicans). Women won 20 of these contested positions (17 Democrats and three Republicans). All four contests in which women faced each other were carried by Democrats. No incumbent woman Democratic House member was defeated. When the uncontested seats held by women are included, the 23 women—18 Democrats and 5 Republicans—who were elected to the 1991 House represent an increase of two over 1989.

Of the total of 31 women in the 1991 legislature, 80.6% (25) were Democrats and 19.4% (6) Republican. This Democratic dominance among women legislators mirrors past sessions and indicates that the Republican party has difficulty in recruiting and/or electing women to the legislature.

It is interesting to note that including all members of the 1991 legislature, the average age at which women were first elected, 47.9, is somewhat older than the 45.5 years at which on average, men joined the legislature.[13]

While the gender composition of legislatures in all states is changing with time, male-female differences in voting have also become apparent. Nationally, the turnout of women has historically been less than that of men. Beginning in the 1980's, however, turnout for women became higher than for men. Many political scientists believe that this has occurred because turnout for women has declined less than for men. Today, on a national basis, women outnumber men in the eligible electorate. In Montana, the Eastern Montana College Poll of National, State and Local Issues has found that women represent about 50% of the registered voters are just as likely, although not more likely, to vote than men.[14]

In the 1980's political analysts began talking about a "gender gap" when referring to the tendency of women to have greater partisan identification with the Democratic party. The EMC Poll has also generally found a statistically significant relationship ($p = .05$) between gender and partisanship. While the partisan affiliation of men appears somewhat more fluid, the survey has generally found that a greater percentage of women than men identify themselves as Democrats. In every survey, except one, conducted between February, 1989 and November, 1991, either a plurality or a majority of women responded that they were Democrats.[15]

In terms of opinions, the EMC Poll has often found statistically significant differences based upon gender. In fact, following partisanship, significant male-female differences are more prevalent than are variations based upon age or upon such other factors as place of residence (i.e., whether respondents live in the eastern or western congressional districts or in urban or rural areas).

The gender differences cited below were found in one or more of the EMC surveys. Differences of opinion are sometimes expressed in terms of direction, that is, where men and women maintain opposite viewpoints. It must be kept in mind, however, that "differences" may simply mean differences of degree, in which nearly equal numbers of men and women express the same opinion but where women feel more (or less) strongly about the issue than men.

Women had a greater tendency than men (86.2% compared to 75.3%) to say Montana had "too much" or "about [the] right amount" of gambling. A majority

of women (55.7%) favored banning "objectionable" musical recordings from public sale, while a majority of men (52.7%) opposed this policy. On a 1-10 scale, where 1 represents "poor" and 10 "excellent," women gave President Bush a lower approval rating (6.69) than men (7.13). Women (36.8%) also expressed more opposition to U.S. involvement in the Gulf War than men, but were less opposed (51.5% to 67.8%) to the last Soviet peace initiative. A gender difference on a question about women in combat was *not* statistically significant (a majority of both men and women supported the concept).[16]

While gender and opinions about abortion have most often *not* been related, on a 1-10 scaled question, women who held either pro-choice *or* pro-life positions expressed more intense opinions on the issue than males (8.65 and 8 respectively for women; 7.94 and 7.79 for men). Further, women were also more likely than men (50.5% compared to 37.8%) to say a legislative candidate's position on abortion would be the "most important" consideration or "matter a great deal" in how they voted.[17]

Men expressed more opposition to gun control than women. This was not a surprising result given the fact that 85% of the men surveyed reported owning a gun while a majority of women said they did not.[18]

In conclusion, gender differences are apparent in the composition of the legislature, both in terms of the relative number of women elected and the preponderance of Democratic women solons. This latter legislative difference usually reflects overall partisan identification, with more women than men normally identifying themselves as Democrats. Finally, men and women have often expressed significant differences of opinion, both in direction and intensity, on a number of important public policy issues.

Political Generations and Contemporary Montana Politics

To some extent, therefore, a gender gap does exist in Montana politics. Is there also a generation gap? Currently, there are four main political generations active in Montana: the pre-Depression generation, those born prior to 1929; the depression/WWII generation, those born between 1929-1945; the baby-boom generation, born from 1946 to 1964; and the post-baby boomers who comprise the smallest political generation because many of them are not yet of voting age. It is obvious that a cycle exists in which each new generation joins and then replaces that of its parents and finally is itself supplanted by younger cohorts. But generational political replacement occurs so gradually that it is seldom analyzed.

In his 1980 book, *Great Expectations,* Landon Y. Jones examined our largest generation, the baby-boomers.[19] The 76.4 million Americans born between 1946-1964 constitute about one-third of the population. Because there are smaller generations ahead of and behind it, baby boomers have been described as the "pig in the python," the generation that has affected most things as it moves through the decades. Landon Jones wrote: "No single generation has had more impact on us than the baby boom, and no single person has been untouched. The baby boom is, and will continue to be, the decisive generation in our history. . . They are a generational tyranny."[20]

Each generation, of course, is shaped by different life experiences. Baby boomers are the first generation to have grown up with television, they were affected by the relative economic prosperity of the 1950's rather than by the Depression of the 1930's, they saw many of their heroes assassinated in the 1960's, and their world view has been shaped more by Vietnam than by World War II or the Gulf conflict. While some of them appeared revolutionary in the 1960's, most seem evolutionary in the 1990's. This generation possesses great potential political power because of this sheer size—about 40% of the eligible electorate. As the oldest baby boomers became 45 years old in 1991, the generation began entering an age group that normally exhibits high voter turnout. Writing from the perspective of the late 1970's, Jones predicted that such disruptive events as Vietnam, which helped shape many baby boomer's lives, would lead many of them to become Independent voters. However, the EMC Poll has not found (for Montanans, at least) a significant relationship based upon generation between respondents who identify with one of the two major political parties compared to those who claim to be Independents. There is, however, a correlation between age and turnout, with older Montanans expressing a greater intention to vote than younger adults.[21]

Within the past decade significant generational change, much of it involving baby boomers, has occurred in Montana. In 1991, all five of the less visible statewide elective offices—Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Auditor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Clerk of the Supreme Court—were held by baby boomers. A member of this generation was recently appointed Lieutenant Governor and both of the Republican and three of the five Democratic nominees in the 1992 Gubernatorial race are baby boomers.

Generational change is also reflected in the changing composition of the legislature.[22] As was true in the case of women elected to the legislature, the Republican party has also been less successful in recruiting and electing baby-boom legislators. While the Republicans

do relatively well in electing members of the Depression and World War II generation, they derive a higher percentage of their representation than do the Democrats from those born before 1929. Of the 150 legislators in the 1991 session, 31.3% (47) were baby boomers (15 Republicans and 32 Democrats), 48% (72) belonged to the Depression/World War II generation (41 Democrats and 31 Republicans), and 20.7% (31) were born prior to 1929 (17 Democrats and 14 Republicans). While there were six women baby-boom legislators, five were Democrats. Between 1981 and 1991 the percentage of baby boomers serving increased by more than 95% (from 24 to 47). Nonetheless, the pre-Depression generation has not yet retired from politics. Of the 40 legislators elected for the first time in 1990, nine became 62 or older in 1991.

Following the 1990 general election, the changing generational composition of the legislature was also reflected in both parties' leadership. In the 1991 Senate four of the elected leadership positions were won by baby boomers, one by a Depression/WWII generation legislator, and one by a solon from the pre-Depression era. In the House, five of the six elected leadership positions were held by baby boomers and one by a legislator from the Depression/WWII generation.

While the EMC Polls have found a statistically significant relationship between gender and partisanship among Montana adults, they have not uncovered a significant relationship between party affiliation and age. But the surveys have found some statistically significant differences of opinion based upon age.[23] The concept of women serving in combat was supported by almost three-quarters (71.8%) of those aged 18-25; two-thirds (65.0%) of the baby boomers; a majority of the Depression/WWII generation; but only slightly more than one-third (35.7%) of respondents 62 or older. A majority of all those aged 18-44 supported a Martin Luther King state holiday in contrast to a majority of all those 45 or older who opposed the idea. Almost three-quarters of the 62-or-older generation favored banning public sales of "objectionable" musical recordings, while more than 80% of the 18-25 group opposed such a ban.

Perhaps as important as the significant differences of opinion based upon age which have been mentioned, are the issues upon which age and opinion have *not* been found to be statistically related. Attitudes about abortion, a sales tax, and support for Representatives Ron Marlenee or Pat Williams were not found to be related to age.

Thus, a generation gap based upon age and partisanship does not now appear to exist in Montana. A generation gap does exist in terms of the legislature with the Democratic party being more successful in nominating and/or electing baby boomers. Differences of opinion based upon age are significant on some issues but are less numerous than gender-based views.

Reapportioning and Redistricting Montana

Montana's constitutional convention of 1889 paved the way for statehood.[24] In the period from 1880-1889 the discovery of copper had led to the growth of the counties in the western part of the state. Delegates from the less populated eastern portion of the territory feared that they would lack influence in a legislature apportioned totally on the basis of population. These anxieties were expressed in a convention struggle over the composition of the Senate. Counties with smaller populations generally accepted the concept of proportional representation for the House but demanded one, and only one, senator per county. A delegate from a rural county argued that if the Senate were to be apportioned on the basis of population, the larger counties:

> would place a Chinese wall around these counties and make the counties of the rest of the State build it and pay for it. . .and within that Chinese wall they would build all the institutions that the State of Montana would have, and if they could they would make the rest of the counties pay for them.[25]

The more populous counties capitulated and accepted the allocation of one senator per county, fearing that in the absence of this concession, rural voters would oppose the constitution.

In 1895 the legislature adopted a statute mandating that each county receive at least one House seat regardless of population. From 1889 until court-ordered reapportionment took place in 1965, most legislative districts were single-member in nature except for a few multi-member House districts in the more populous counties.

By 1960 the state legislature was grossly malapportioned. The state's eight most populous counties contained about 52% of the population but elected only 42.5% of the House and 15% of the Senate. The system of one senator per county meant that Petroleum County's 900 inhabitants had representation equal to Yellowstone County's 79,000 citizens. An observer noted how this malapportionment affected public policy: "Regardless of which political party controlled the legislature, a conservative orientation was characteristic normally of that body. . . . Inevitably. . .legislation favored by rural interests. . .had

a more friendly reception than that favored by urban interests."[26]

The 1964 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Wesberry v. Sanders,* mandating "one-man, one-vote" had important implications for the Montana legislature. When the 1964 legislative session convened, Montana was one of only seven states which had not yet begun the process of reapportionment following the 1960 census. Within several days of the convening of the legislature, a Butte resident filed suit in federal district court to force reapportionment upon the principle of "one-man, one-vote." A three-judge federal panel found that apportioning the state Senate on the basis of geography was unconstitutional and informed legislators that Montana was suffering from malapportionment. If necessary, the court said that it would act to remedy the situation.

A legislative attempt to reapportion failed, and on July 7, 1965, the federal judges announced a reapportionment plan (*Herweg v. 39th Legislative Assembly*). New legislative districts were established which, while often joining counties, still retained county lines as electoral boundaries and preserved many multi-member districts because they were not found to be in violation of federal law.

This federal court action finally remedied Montana's historic pattern of rural gerrymandering. The feelings of many rural Montanans were summed up by one of their senators: "Their plan to reapportion Montana joins counties together like Tinker Toys and some of these counties have only gumbo roads between them. Some of the districts are larger than the state of Massachusetts."[27]

During Montana's constitutional convention of 1972, the delegates adopted a proposal establishing a House that would range between 80-100 members and a Senate that would hold between 40-50. They also mandated that legislators be elected from single-member districts as nearly equal in population as possible and that each Senate district be composed of two contiguous House districts. The delegates also took a far-reaching step by relieving the legislature of the responsibility for reapportionment by mandating the establishment of a special commission to undertake the task.

The five-person Districting and Apportionment Commission, established by the 1972 Constitution, is constituted following each federal census. The majority and minority leaders of both houses each appoint one commissioner "none of whom may be public officials." The commissioners meet and select the final commissioner who serves as chair. If there is no agreement as to who should serve as chair, the Supreme Court makes the choice by majority vote. The Commission submits its plan "to the legislature at the first regular session after its appointment or after the census figures are available." The legislature has 30 days to comment on the plan, but the Commission retains the final authority to approve it.

Montana's first reapportionment Commission redistricted the state in advance of the 1974 elections. Because single-member districts had to be established, it was necessary to abandon the state's historic preference for electoral boundaries based upon county lines.

Montana's second reapportionment Commission was named in 1979. After being delayed by legal challenges to the national census figures, the Commission began its work in July, 1981. In redistricting the two congressional seats, a minuscule deviation of 43 people was obtained by moving four counties from the western to the eastern district.

The Commission encountered more serious difficulties in delineating state legislative districts. For instance, problems arose in trying to redistrict Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. The base had a history of low voter turnout; in 1974 residents of the installation cast only 26 votes for legislative House candidates and this increased to only 63 in 1978. By 1981 the base lacked sufficient population to justify a representative. Malmstrom's legislator challenged a proposal to establish districts which would divide the base, charging that this might violate the "community of interest" principle. Fears were also expressed bacause Malmstrom contained a significant percentage of Montana's black popultion; dividing the installation could lead to charges of racial gerrymandering. The commission finally attached a contiguous area to the base to form a new House district.

In 1991, Montana is one of only two states (the other is Hawaii) to assign primary responsibility for drawing congressional districts to a commission rather than to the legislature, and one of only five states to employ some type of special body or advisory mechanism to assist the legislature in reapportioning. The first two times the redistricting Commission was employed (1974 and 1981), Montana achieved a relatively fair reapportionment and avoided the heated political battles in which many legislators engage when they attempt to reallocate their own seats.

The five-person Districting and Apportionment Commission appointed to deal with the 1990 census was forced to confront the possibility of the state's loss of a U.S. House seat. At its first meeting held in April 1991, after census data was reported, the Commission unanimously declared the entire State of Montana to be

one congressional district and filed the plan with the Secretary of State's office as required by law. A single U.S. House seat, comprising the entire state, would make the resulting district the single largest in the U.S. in terms of population and the second largest, after Alaska, in terms of land area. Montana's land area is about the same as Japan's; the former eastern congressional district is somewhat larger than the former West Germany and the former western district is slightly smaller than Czechoslovakia. In contrast to the approximately 800,000 Montanans who might be represented by one House member, there will be a House member for every 573,000 Californians. Montana Attorney General Marc Racicot filed suit on behalf of Montana challenging the constitutionality of the reapportionment process. In an October, 1991 decision, which has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, a special three-judge federal panel ruled in favor of Montana.

The possible loss of a House seat has important implications for Montana politics as it set the stage for a titanic battle between Republican eastern district incumbent Ron Marlenee and western district incumbent Pat Williams. In a hypothetical match-up, the November, 1991, EMC Poll found that Williams and Marlenee were almost even, with Williams attracting 45.5% support and Marlenee 42.1%. 4.7% of the respondents backed neither congressman, and more than 7% were undecided. In terms of degree of support, on a 1-10 scaled question where 1 represented "very unsure" and 10 "very sure" both men were also essentially even—Williams at 7.72 and Marlenee at 7.67.

An anlaysis of the responses found that, to some extent, the race pits eastern Montanans against their western brethren, and urban residents (the seven most populous counties) against their rural counterparts. A statistically significant relationship was found between the respondents' place of residence and who they supported; Marlenee was backed by 54.1% of eastern district dwellers, Williams by 55.7% of those living in the western district. 51.1% of rural residents backed Marlenee while 50.6% of urbanites liked Williams. Marlenee was supported by a plurality of 47.2% of females and Williams by a plurality of 46.9% of male respondents. Respondents' support for the candidates based upon their perception of the Gulf conflict, age, or income was not found to be significant.

In early 1991 the Districting and Apportionment Commission decided against attempting to reduce the size of the legislature. As mentioned earlier, the 1972 Constitution mandated that the House consist of 80-100 members and the Senate 40-50. A state legislator argued that only lawmakers and not the Commission had the right to decrease the size of the legislature. The Commission agreed. In drawing legislative boundaries an effort will be made to follow the lines of existing legislative districts and other governmental boundaries, such as those which delineate county and school districts, to recognize geographic barriers like mountains and rivers, and, whenever possible, to leave Indian reservations intact.

The Commission is proceeding with its work by redrawing the boundaries of the state's 100 House and 50 Senate seats to create single-member districts roughly equal in population but not in geographic size. They are working with federal census block data; each block consists of a variable-but-known number of people. Census blocks do not cross county lines. Dividing Montana's population of about 799,000 by 100 produces ideal House districts of 7990 people each. Two contiguous House districts will be electorally stitched together to produce 50 Senate districts of about 15,980 Montanas each. Because of Montana's modest population growth of 12,375 between 1980 and 1990, each ideal House district should have about 248 additional people. While this increase seems minuscle, it can take a significant amount of land area in parts of eastern Montana to encompass 248 citizens, especially when one considers that the state's least populous county, Petroleum County, now has a population of only 519. The Commission will try to maintain a $\pm 5\%$ deviation in population between the most and least populous districts. Commission Chairman L. A. Gulbrandson stated that some of the districts are going to be "unwieldy" and "some. . . in eastern Montana are going to be horrible."[28] One existing Montana Senate district is as large in land area as Belgium, but, rather than having a population of 10 million, it contains between 15-16,000 citizens. Another Senate district is as large as Vermont, another El Salvador, another Swaziland, and another Connecticut.

In 1991, only 26 of Montana's 56 counties contained enough population to have at least one House district located entirely within its boundaries.[29] And only 11 counties had enough people to justify one or more senate seats. Seven House districts are composed of parts or all of three counties, and one crosses four county lines. Three different Senate districts encompass all or parts of five counties.

Montana's shifting population has implications for the east-west and urban-rural distribution of legislative power. But the shift of seats in the 1992 general election will probably be less significant than the changes which occurred as the result of the 1981 redistricting. Based upon the 1990 census figures, no county has in-

creased enough in population to gain an additional House seat. Gallatin County is entitled to approximately 95% of an additional House seat, Flathead 91%, Yellowstone 67% and Lewis and Clark 56%. Silver Bow has lost population equivalent to 52% of a House seat. Due to annexations, the city of Missoula is entitled to an additional House seat and Billings 1.8 seats, but these will be gained at the expense of the rest of the respective county residents.

Following the reapportionment and redistricting which occurred after the 1980 census, the eastern and western congressional districts had almost equal population. The 1990 census, however, found that the former western district had a population 35,000 greater than the previous eastern district. An equitable assignment of legislative districts would result in a gain of approximately four House and two Senate seats for the western part of the state. In 1990, the 14 least populous counties were all in the former eastern district and 10 of the 15 most populous counties in the old western district. The urban-rural differences are less significant. Between 1980 and 1990 the seven most populous counties gained 12,375 inhabitants, while the other 49 counties lost 3,022 people. The urban-rural shift would have been more profound had not Cascade and Silver Bow counties together lost more than 7,000 people. The net result will probably be a one or two seat gain for the urban counties.

To determine whether east-west and urban-rural differences have been reflected in changing electoral behavior, election results were anlayzed for four reasonably separated years: 1952, 1964, 1976, and 1988. Each of these elections included races for President, U.S. Senator and Governor. The percentage of the vote received by the Democratic candidate for each of these offices in each county was calculated. Finally, the resulting percentages were added and divided by three to produce an overall average for the Democratic vote. The result was a rank order of counties from most Democratic to least Democratic (or most Republican).[30]

In 1952, Deer Lodge County was the most Democratic county followed by Silver Bow, while Sweet Grass County edged out Gallatin County for least Democratic. Silver Bow and Cascade were the only urban counties among the top 10 Democratic counties, while the only urban county among the 10 least Democratic was Gallatin, ranking 55.

Three counties appear among the top ten Democratic areas in each of the four years analyzed. Deer Lodge was the most Democratic county in each of the years examined, while Silver Bow and Mineral counties also made the list each time. Three counties also appear among the least Democratic (i.e., most Republican) in each year examined; Sweet Grass, Carter, and Garfield. Further, except for Gallatin County in 1952 and 1976, none of the seven most populous counties appear on the least Democratic list (most Republican) in any of these years.

Conclusion

In 1991, in comparison to the recent past, some characteristics of Montana's political milieu have changed, others are evolving, and some have remained much the same. In discussing Montana's political conflicts, one source noted disputes over "the sales tax, funding help for public schools, how to manage the education, highway and liquor bureaucracies. . . ."[31] Indeed, problems relating to these very issues were debated by Governor Stephens and the 1991 legislature. The quotation, however, describes the political problems faced by Governor Sam Ford in the 1940's, and thus well illustrates the persistent nature of some of Montana's political conundrums.

Today, Montana's political landscape is changing because the relative size of its population has led to the possible loss of a U.S. House seat. Within the state, population movement means that legislative power is continuing to shift from east to west and from rural to urban areas. Increasing numbers of women are being elected to the legislature and members of the baby-boom generation are supplanting their political elders. Further, differences of opinion reflecting gender, generational and geographical factors exist on some important political questions. As this process of structural and generational political evolution continues, it remains unclear exactly how they will alter Montana's historical political patterns or shape the state's future.

Endnotes

1. Quoted and paraphrased material in this paragraph may be found in Burton K. Wheeler, *Yankee from the West* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962), 80. Hereafter cited as Wheeler, *Yankee.*
2. Ibid., 81.
3. The author first began studying the state's political tendencies while an undergraduate political science student of Dr. Thomas Payne at the University of Montana. For a more in-depth explantion of Montana's political trends, see James J. Lopach, ed., *We the People of Montana...The Working of a Popular Government* (Missoula: Montana Press Publishing, 1983), 52-55.
4. These numbers do not include the 1974 legislative session (which was not proceded by a general election), the only annual session held under the new 1972 constitution. Following the passage of a constitutional initiative, the state returned to biennial sessions in 1975.
5. The conclusion is based upon an analysis of state legislative returns found in the November 26, 1990 issue of *Insight,* 17.
6. Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries,* 3rd ed. (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988), 202. Hereafter cited as Malone and Roeder, *Montana.*
7. Quoted and paraphrased material in this paragraph may be found in Wheeler, *Yankee,* 90-91.
8. Ellis Waldron and Paul B. Wilson, *Atlas of Montana Elections 1889-1976* (Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1978), 54. Hereafter cited as Waldron and Wilson, *Atlas.*
9. Ibid., 61.
10. The statistics on women legislators were devleoped from Ellis Waldron, *Montana Legislators 1864-1979: Profiles and Biographical Directory* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1980), 20; and the biennial issues of *Lawmakers of Montana* (1981-1991) published in various years by ARCO and Montana trade associations.
11. National Women's Political Caucus, *National Directory of Women Elected Officials—1989* (Washington, DC: National Women's Political Caucus, 1989), 8-12.
12. The figures on women legislative candidates in this and the following paragraph were developed from, Montana Secretary of State, "1990 General Election Results—Legislative Candidates" (1990).
13. The average age at which legislators were first elected was calculated from biographical material contained in *Lawmakers of Montana—Legislative Session of 1991.* Hereafter cited as *Lawmakers—1991.*
14. The co-directors of the Eastern Montana College Poll of National, State and Local Issues are Craig Wilson and Joe Floyd. The surveys are conducted by students enrolled in two upper-division Sociology and Political Science courses. The 400+ random sample telephone interviews (±5% margin of error) are carried out with EMC's Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing System (CATI). Between February, 1989 and November, 1991, six polls have been conducted. The statistics on women voters were developed from the July, 1990 survey which compared likely voters to adults not registered or unlikely to vote.
15. Findings about partisanship are based upon an analysis of the results of the Eastern Montana College Poll of National, State and Local Issues (February, 1989, July, 1989, February, 1990, July, 1990, February, 1991, and November, 1991). In the November 1991 survey, gender and partisanship were not related in a statistically significant manner.
16. All survey results reported in this paragraph, except for the question on banning records (which came from the July, 1990 survey), were taken from the February, 1991 EMC Poll.
17. The results on the abortion questions came from the February and July, 1990 EMC surveys. Questions regarding "allowable circumstances" for abortion were asked in the August, 1989, February and July, 1991 polls. Only in the February, 1990 survey were gender and "allowable circumstances for abortion" found to be related in a statistically significant manner. Among women respondents, 43% were pro-life, 56.5% pro-choice and .5% undecided. Males surveyed were 39.8% pro-life, 56.9% pro-choice and 3.3% undecided.
18. Questions dealing with controls on handguns and semi-automatic rifles were asked in the February, 1989 EMC survey. The gun ownership question was asked in the February, 1990 survey.
19. The paraphrased and quoted material in this paragraph may be found in Landon Y. Jones, *Great Expectations* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980), 1-8.

20. Ibid., 1-8.
21. The statistically significant relationship between age and turnout was found in the July, 1990 Poll.
22. The demographic statistics reported in this paragraph were developed from biographical material contained in *Lawmakers—1991.*
23. The statistics on the questions discussed in this paragraph relating to women in combat and the Martin Luther King state holiday come from the February, 1991 EMC Poll. The results for the questions about banning the sale of "objectionable" records was taken from the July, 1990 survey.
24. Portions of this section on reapportionment which deal with the historical background were adopted from Craig Wilson, "Reapportionment: The Montana Experience," unpublished paper delivered at the April, 1982 meeting of the Western Social Science Association (Denver).
25. *Proceedings and Debates of the Montana Constitutional Convention* (1889), 629, as cited in Ibid., 1-2.
26. Thomas Payne, "Montana: Politics Under the Copper Dome," in Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, eds., *The Montana Past: An anthology,* (Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1969), 324 as cited in Ibid., 3-4.
27. *The Billings Gazette,* July 8, 1965, 1 and 5 as cited in Ibid., 5.
28. *Great Falls Tribune,* April 10, 1991, 10.
29. The conclusions about redistricting in this paragraph are based upon an analysis of U.S. Bureau of the Census, "1990 Census of Population for Governmental Units: Montana," January 2, 1991.
30. This analysis of voting patterns is patterned after one developed for individual years by Waldron and Wilson, *Atlas.*
31. Malone and Roeder, *Montana,* 297.

Peopling the Last Best Place

1870-1990

by
William Wyckoff
Montana State University

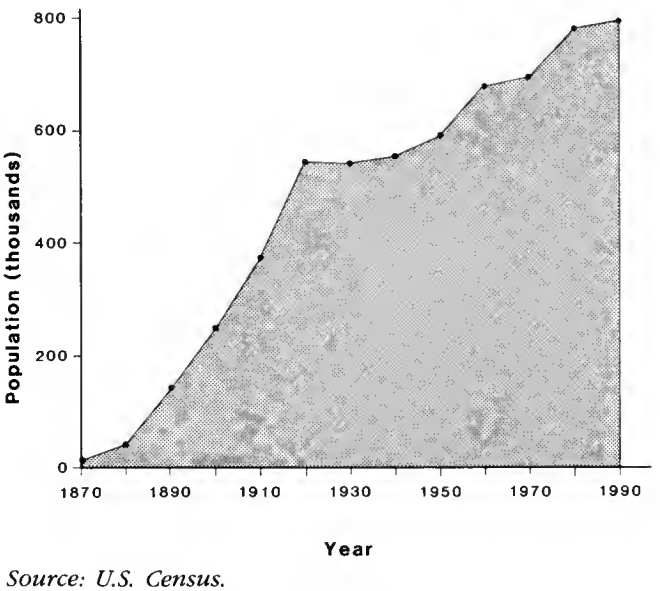
Introduction

The state of Montana faces the consequences of population stagnation and decline in the 1990's and beyond. The causes underlying the present situation are diverse and are rooted in the complex historical geography of the state. This study provides a framework to assess Montana's past settlement geography and to ascertain how its population has changed over time. Without that basic understanding, Montanans will have limited power to deal with the difficult issues tomorrow is surely bringing to the state.

Never have Montanans ventured far from the land to make their living, and that fact, more than any other, has shaped the state's population geography over the past 130 years. Historical patterns of settlement consistently reveal the interplay between Montana's diverse environment and the people who have chosen to live there. Several persisting factors have influenced Montana's population geography over time and each of these factors have produced quite different processes of change in various parts of the state. Indeed, one can conclude from the historical record that the future peopling of this "Last Best Place" will make it even more difficult to address Montana's population problem as a single issue. Rather, the record of disparate growth and decline in the state, both yesterday and today, will require a diversity of imaginative responses tomorrow.

Most simply put, Montana's Anglo population (which constitutes the vast majority of the state's non-Native American population) spent its first 60 years initially occupying the state and the last 70 years adjusting to its limitations (Figure 1).[1] The statewide pattern of population growth is clear: the pre-1920 era witnessed rapid expansion as the state's diverse resource base was stripped from its Native American inhabitants and quickly developed by Anglo miners, farmers, loggers, and settlers. Since the First World War, however, population expansion has been much more limited and even nonexistent as the new Anglo residents have been compelled to acknowledge and adjust to the region's varied and inevitable limitations.

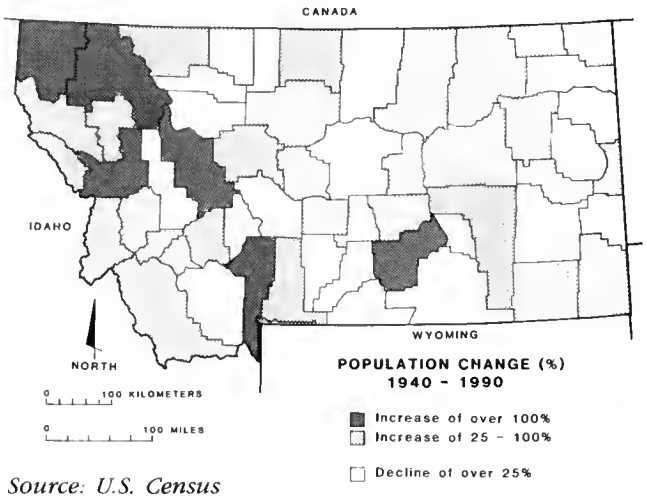
Figure 1
Montana Population, 1870-1990



Source: U.S. Census.

This broad and sweeping pattern is partly illusory, however. At another level of analysis, the more recent era has seen dramatic changes in population geography. The past 50 years, for example, while witnessing only a modest rise in the state's overall population, has seen major shifts within the state (Figure 2).[2] Selected counties in western Montana doubled their populations while widespread areas of the eastern plains lost 25-50 percent of their residents. The exceptions to these

Figure 2
Montana Population Change, by county, 1940-1990



Source: U.S. Census

trends also prove instructive and most likely prove predictable: old mining counties in the west such as Granite, Deer Lodge, and Silver Bow have lost populations while urban-focused Cascade and Yellowstone counties in the east experienced sizable increases.

Five Historical Themes

How do we account for this varied peopling process? Five themes are essential to understanding the settlement pattern across the entire state. In fact, western American historians ably argue that these considerations are valuable in understanding much of the larger region's historical geography.

One persistent motif is the limiting and often isolating environment of the region. Author Wallace Stegner eloquently identifies the challenges involved in "living dry," suggesting that "adaptation is the covenant that all successful organisms sign with the dry country."[3] Historian Donald Worster echoes that sentiment, arguing that the Interior West is a distinctive place because its economy has traditionally been bound closely to the region's limiting and fragile environment.[4] To ignore such limits produced the pain and population collapse experienced by many eastern Montana localities earlier this century (Figure 3). Isolation is also an ongoing reality for much of the Interior West and certainly for Montana. Historical geographer Donald Meinig emphasizes how the isolated population clusters of the American West produced a different frontier experience from the patterns of frontier settlement in the more densely and continuously settled East.[5]

A second condition which the state has yet to escape, and some say never will, is the enduring economic col-

Figure 3
Eastern Montana Drought, H.B. Syverud photograph
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Photo Archives, Helena

onialism which is still a part of life in the region today. The fact that much of the state's economy is resource-based, often controlled by external forces, and especially prone to the vagaries of boom and bust cycles, guarantees that past, present, and future population fluctuations remain beyond local control. Historians William Robbins and Patricia Limerick both have argued stridently that it has been the West's traditional misfortune to be plundered by larger and more powerful outside institutions and that optimistic pronouncements to the contrary which proclaim the West's economic independence are illusory.[6] The stacks, workshops, and homes of Anaconda (Figure 4) suggest the powerful

Figure 4
Anaconda, 1923
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Photo Archives, Helena

relationship between a local population and a global resource economy most blatantly, perhaps, but analogies could surely be offered from the wheat fields

of the Triangle, to the lumberyards of the western slope, to the energy-dependent towns perched on the oil, gas, and coal fields in the east. Understanding how these resource-based economic cycles have differentially impacted varied portions of the state is essential to making sense of the related patterns of population change.

Also shaping the state's population geography are technological changes that have swept across the region during the past century. Historian Walter Prescott Webb argued that only through a series of technological innovations including railroads, windmills, and barbed wire were Montanans able to subdue the vast spaces and climatic limitations of the region.[7] But technological forces that perhaps operated to populate the state in the nineteenth century have since produced opposite results: who can deny, for example, the implications for workers of labor-saving technology in agriculture, mining, and the forest products industry (Figure 5)? Technology's very success has led to significant population losses in the state and this will likely continue in the future. Local responses to technological change, however, are complex and suggest the varied impact of technology on particular places. The automobile, for example, probably helped to depopulate the eastern part of the state as the greater mobility it gave farmers rendered many small settlements unneccesary.[8] Conversely, the same technology in western Montana expanded the potential for outdoor recreation and tourism and no doubt spurred population growth in those locales.

A fourth pivotal factor that has been an enduring influence on the pace and direction of Montana settlement has been the federal government. Among others, historians Michael Malone and Gerald Nash correctly argue that the American West has hardly developed in an institutional vacuum, that from the inception of Anglo dominance the strong hand of Washington, D.C. has profoundly shaped the course of settlement.[9] Consider the unambiguous connections between the state's population geography and such things as an evolving federal lands disposal system (Figure 6). Consider also

Figure 5
Three-plow tractor, early 1920's
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Photo Archives, Helena

Figure 6
Homestead information, from *Montana—The Treasure State,* Great Northern Railroad Publication, 1914
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society Photo Archives, Helena

16 Montana—The Treasure State

Typical Homesteader's Beginning—the Homestead "Shack."

Free Government Land in Montana

"Homesteads in Three Years"

THE Government Land Office records show a large amount of free land still vacant in Montana, situated principally in Valley, Richland, Dawson and Blaine Counties. A large portion of this vacant land is not adapted to agricultural purposes, being rough and broken, on the other hand a considerable percentage is good farm land.

There are still a few *surveyed* homesteads available but they are scattered and run from 160 to 640 acres. It is at present a difficult matter for a number of people to secure homesteads in a body, but one or more families can obtain land in many different localities.

The best opportunity in Montana today for the homesteader is to settle on unsurveyed government lands under "Squatter's Rights." A large proportion of the government land in Montana is still unsurveyed. The settlement and development of Montana has been so rapid since it has been demonstrated that the soil is the most productive in the Northwest for small grains etc., that the government has been unable to keep pace with the surveys and under the "Squatter's Rights" that portion of the unsurveyed land not already occupied is subject to homestead entry.

Thousands of people have taken advantage of the opportunities to secure nice, *unsurveyed* land and it is going to be only a short time until the greater portion of the unsurveyed land is also occupied. A home-seeker has the same rights on unsurveyed land as on surveyed land, with the exception that he must start improvements at once and must reside continuously on the land in order to hold it. The time which he has resided on the land prior to its being surveyed applies on the three years which it is necessary to reside on a homestead in order to secure title from the government.

The Great Northern Railway issues a Montana Map Folder and as soon as passing corrective lines which are corrected at frequent intervals, and through these sections are endeavor to show homeseekers approximately the locations and descriptions of the surveyed and unsurveyed lands in the Northern Montana. If you are not supplied with this Montana Map Folder, write for a copy.

Homestead Laws of the United States

ANY American citizen, native or naturalized, who has not previously exercised his homestead privileges, has the right to file on one quarter section of land in the United States or any of its territories, including Montana.

Any man or woman 21 years of age or over, or any person who has been married, or who is the head of a family, may file on a homestead.

Aliens who have declared their intention to become citizens of the United States can also file on homesteads, and under the same conditions as citizens.

How Foreigners May Secure Homesteads

Canadians and other foreigners may make application for their first citizenship papers before the clerk of county court, at the time they make application for their homestead filing. The final papers may be secured from the same official at the end of five years, at which time the government will issue deed for the homestead, provided the law has been complied with.

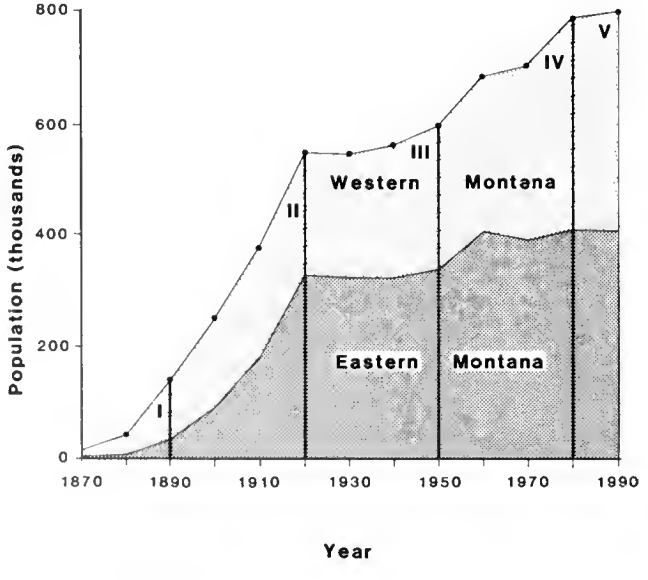
The First Step

To procure a homestead in Montana, the first step necessary is to visit the state, call at the local land office having jurisdiction over the section that you are interested in, go out on the land and become well informed regarding the location, character and quality of the land. Determine where you wish to locate then call at the United States land office where the applicant is required to make a declaration, in accordance with the character of land described in the application as to whether it is agricultural land or mineral land, also as to the presence or absence of timber on the land. The officials will also furnish maps giving many details of information concerning the land.

the geography of railroad land grants, the creation of national forests and parks, the development of large-scale reclamation projects, the rush of New Deal assistance programs, and the post-war investments in highways and defense. Whether this marriage between Montanans and the federal government is a blessing or a curse, it inevitably will continue to mold the state's population geography in the future as government investments, programs, and policies impact the state.

Finally Montanans need to acknowledge the growing importance of changing cultural geographic influences. Cultural historians such as Roderick Nash, for example, remind us that American attitudes towards nature have evolved considerably over the past century.[10] Mid- and late-twentieth century attitudes concerning the value of high-quality, high-amenity environments have produced zones of population stability or growth in areas whose traditional resource economies were in decline. Certain areas, particularly Montana's southern and western valleys from the Gallatin to the Bitteroot and Flathead have experienced some population increases that at least in part appear related to the growing value of these regions for tourism, recreation, retirement, and amenity-oriented life styles.[11]

Figure 7
Montana Regional Populations, 1870-1990. For detailed county breakdown, see note 12



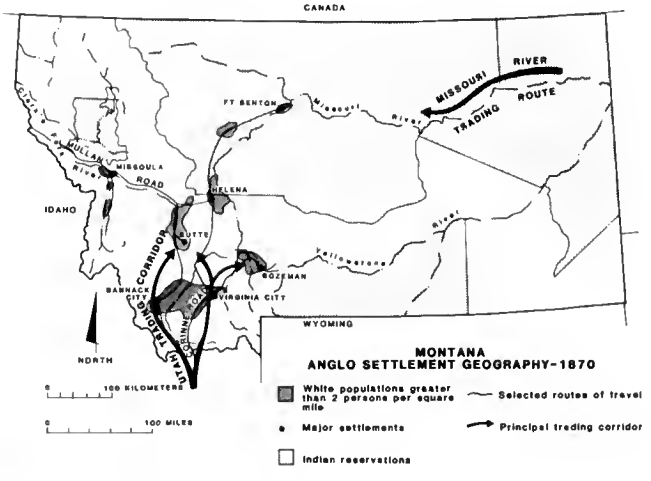
Source: U.S. Census

The changing interplay of all of these influences across Montana's diverse settings explains much of the state's evolving population geography since 1870. In particular, dividing the state into western and eastern portions and then reconstructing their patterns of population change yields five clear-cut eras between 1870 and the present (Figure 7).[12] Each era is marked by a unique set of settlement factors that shaped the two portions of the state in distinctive ways.

Pre—1890 Montana: The Era of Western Dominance

Pre-1890 Montana was a well-defined era of overwhelming western dominance in the state. Initial Anglo thrusts into Montana were guided by a combination of precious metals finds in the southwestern mountains and vigorous resistance on the part of Native American populations to the north and east.[13] Early clusters focused at Bannack, Virginia City, and Helena. In 1870, 96 percent of the Anglo population lived in the western third of the territory. The principal settlements were separated into several discrete population clusters which included the southern mineral belt, the Gallatin Valley, the Butte-Helena areas, and the beginnings of settlement in the Missoula-Bitteroot country (Figure 8).[14] Tenuous trading corridors linked the settlements to the world beyond via the Missouri River on the east, the westward-

Figure 8
Montana Anglo Settlement Geography—1870



Source: see note 14

leading Mullan Road, and the southern routes to Utah. Large Indian reserves blanketed much of the eastern portions of the territory.

This pattern was altered between 1870 and 1890, especially as railroad technology and government land policies broadened the zone of Anglo settlement and contributed to the diversification of the state's economy. Several noteworthy changes occurred as rapid cessions of Blackfeet, Assinboine, Gros Vente, and Crow lands in the 1870's made new lands available to incoming Anglos.[15] The Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads also were completed across the region, linking Montana's resource base to the upper Midwest and Pacific Northwest.[16] Both lines also became natural corridors of settlement. In the west, mining selectively expanded its influence, especially when significant lode operations replaced the more ephemeral placer strikes of the 1860's. Butte City, for example, grew in importance as the mining operations diversified from gold to silver, and then copper.[17] Demand for agricultural goods also spurred settlement, especially across the southern and western valleys. The Gallatin Valley, in particular, became a well-known zone of agricultural production.

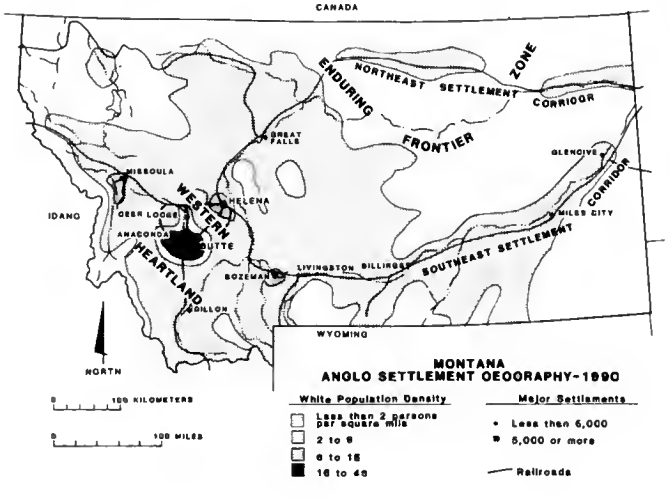
Overall, the state's settlement geography by the year 1890 still reflected a strong western bias with over 70 percent of the state's population focused in the region (Figure 9).[18] The "Western Heartland" supported the densest population clusters, especially around the major mining centers of Butte, Anaconda, and Helena, while narrower fingers of mostly agricultural occupance extended eastward along the railroad-oriented settlement corridors. Sizable areas of the rugged northwest and east central zones remained only thinly peopled by Anglos.

The Era of Emerging Eastern Dominance: 1890—1920

The period between 1890 and 1920 witnessed continued statewide growth (Figure 7). In fact the state's population more than tripled from less than 150,000 in 1890 to almost 550,000 thirty years later. No thirty-year period, before or since, ever witnessed greater absolute population growth. The geographical focus of this post-1890 population growth shifted dramatically from the earlier pattern. By 1920, eastern Montana's share of the state's population more than doubled from 29% to over 60%. It was a period when the state's human geography was thus turned on its head and the previously bypassed eastern plains became the destination for a settlement rush of unprecedented proportions.

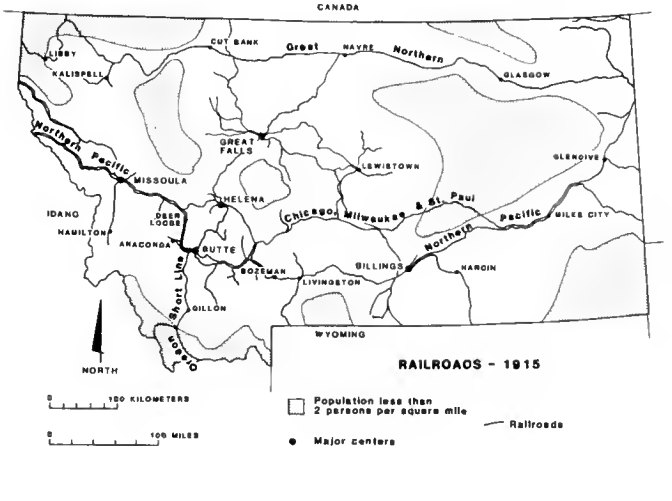
The flood of settlement into the state—particularly into the eastern prairies—grew especially vigorous between 1910 and 1917. By 1915, a network of rail lines crisscrossed the state and only a few frontier islands of isolation remained (Figure 10).[19] Several key influences converged during this era to produce the impressive

Figure 9
Montana Anglo Settlement Geography—1890



Source: see note 18

Figure 10
Montana Railroads—1915



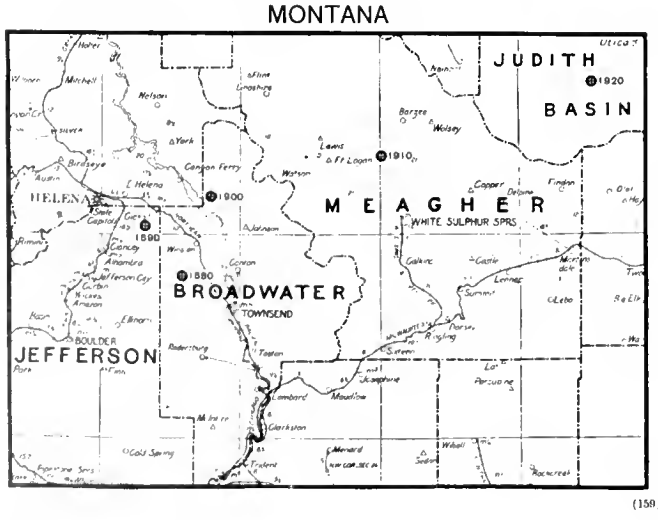
Source: see note 19

population gains in the eastern portion of the state.[20] Government policies certainly contributed. The Newlands Reclamation Act, passed by Congress in 1902, made possible several large-scale irrigation efforts along the Yellowstone, Milk, and Sun Rivers. By 1920, often with federal help and state encouragement, over 1.5 million acres of land were under irrigation. The big push of population into the eastern plains, however, was related to the success of dry farming.[21] Years of experimentation across the Dakotas and Montana, often with aid from the government and railroad interests, convinced farmers that through modern technology and new crop production methods the eastern prairies could support bountiful grain crops. Aiding this infusion of optimism was the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, which allowed incoming settlers to claim 320 acres of free government land.

Two final components fell into place in the following decade to magnify the rush of settlement. The dry farming boosters benefitted from the fact that from 1910 to 1916, rain came predictably to the eastern plains. The demand for farm land and for grain was also in a boom cycle as World War I lifted prices for those key commodities. It is no surprise that virtually every eastern county of the state saw its population increase by at least 50 percent between 1910 and 1920. The state's center of population shifted dramatically eastward, signalling the end to the era of western dominance. In 1890, the state's population center sat near Helena, but thirty years later the magnet of the dry farming boom had drawn the point well eastward towards Lewistown (Figure 11).[22]

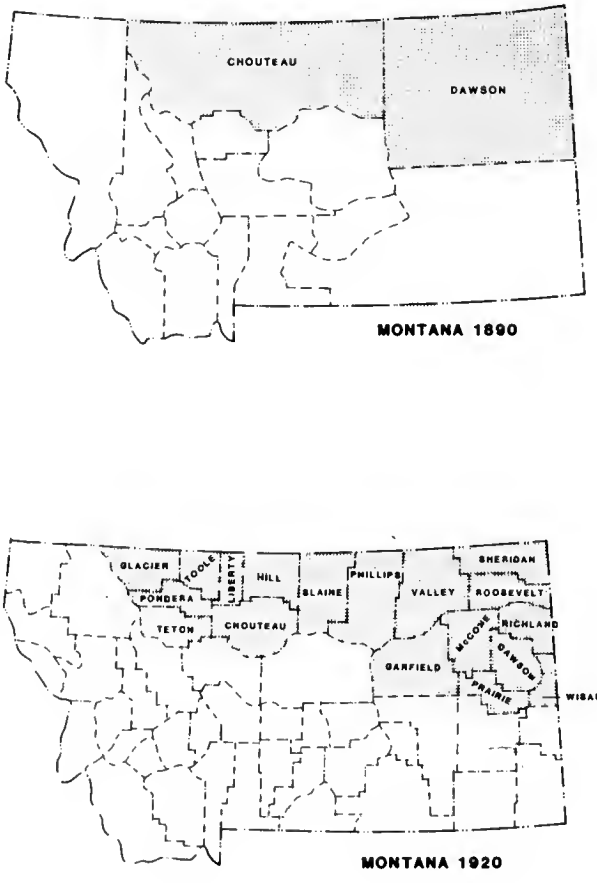
The impact of this population explosion on specific localities was dramatic, fundamentally altering patterns of settlement within a few years. Consider early Dawson and Chouteau counties in the north and east. As population poured into these mostly dryland farming areas between 1890 and 1920, the local political geography was radically redrawn as counties were subdivided many times over (Figure 12). Similarly, the agricultural data reflect fundamental changes. The number of farms and improved acreage for early Dawson and Chouteau counties display phenomenal increases which parallel a

Figure 11
Montana's Center of Population, 1880-1920



Source: see note 22

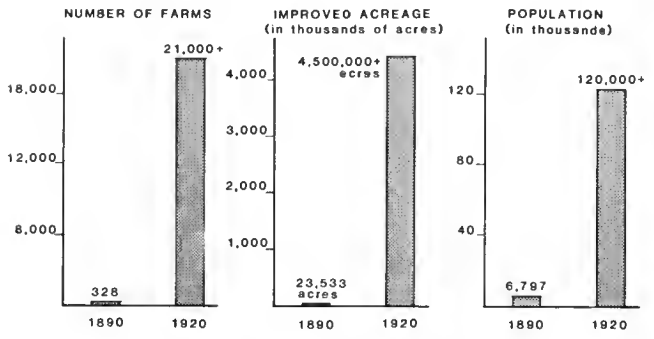
Figure 12
Eastern Montana Political Geography:
Evolution of Dawson and Chouteau Counties
1890 and 1920



Source: U.S. Census

similar explosion in the local population from less than 7,000 in 1890 to over 120,000 in 1920 (Figure 13).

Figure 13
The Changing Settlement Geography
of Eastern Montana:
Dawson and Chouteau Counties
1890 and 1920



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 14
Shocking wheat, Gallatin Valley, Albert Schlechten photograph
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Photo Archives, Helena

Growth in the east was not restricted to rural settings. In fact, Great Falls witnessed a more than six-fold increase in its population between 1890 and 1920. Rail connections guaranteed close economic ties to the upper Midwest.[23] The city also grew in regional economic importance because nearby coal fields spurred the growth of smelting and refining employment and its proximity to the expanding agricultural operations in the vicinity made it a local service center and market town for farmers and ranchers. Similarly, Billings flowered from a hamlet of less than a thousand persons in 1890 to a city of over 16,000 by 1920. Already a major center for the livestock industry in the 1890's, Billings grew along with the prospects for dryland farming in the early twentieth century. Nearby irrigated tracts added to its importance in the middle Yellowstone Valley.

Although growth was slower in western Montana between 1890 and 1920, there were notable exceptions. Gallatin County's population more than doubled as agriculture continued to gain in importance (Figure 14). Burgeoning mining towns also grew. Butte was clearly the state's biggest beneficiary in terms of population gains. Already a sizable mining and industrial town in 1890 with a population of over 10,000, the city's numbers swelled to more than 50,000 by World War I, making it easily the state's largest population cluster. In fact, almost one-third of western Montana's entire population gain between 1890 and 1920 was accounted for by Silver Bow County alone. Butte's growth certainly was a testimony to the remarkable resource base of the region, the propulsive economics of the copper industry, and the increasing tendency toward corporate-

Figure 15
Anaconda, Neversweat, and Mountainview Mines, Butte, 1905
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Photo Archives, Helena

scale, externally controlled investments into larger and deeper mining operations (Figure 15). By World War I, the center was one of the West's great examples of a booming colonial city.[24]

The Era of Adjustment and Accommodation: 1920—1950

Montana's third population era, however, struck quite a different theme. Beginning just prior to 1920 and lasting until after World War II, this era of adjustment and accommodation marked a period of economic stagnation that saw the state's population rise by less than 8 percent while the nation's population grew by over 40 percent. The vagaries of the environmental and economic cycles often converging before 1920 to favor vigorous growth now seemingly conspired to snuff it out, imposing upon the Treasure State a period of sobering reappraisal and reassessment. Population declines in many counties were commonplace and the state's overall count struggled between 500,000 and 600,000 during the entire period (Figure 7).

Four key factors came into play to shape Montana's settlement geography between 1920 and 1950. First, by and large, the initial occupance and easy resource exploitation of the state had been completed by the 1920's.[25] The frontier era of placer gold strikes and bumper wheat crops had passed and with it the high rates of in-migration also slowed. The resource base which remained was more fragile and often costlier to develop though new bounties surely still were uncovered. North central Montana's energy boom in the 1920's and the growing lumber production in the west after 1940 certainly had their impacts, but the era lacked some of the Big Rock Candy Mountain opportunities of pre- 1920 Montana.

A second set of limitations to rapid growth were clearly environmental and greatly impacted the crop and livestock industries in the state from the southwestern valleys to the full length and breadth of the eastern plains.[26] The cruel reality of drought began to creep onto the northern plains as early as the spring of 1917. Havre reported less than one-third of an inch of rain in May and June combined. By harvest time Blaine County farmers realized only half a bushel per acre. In 1918, the drought spread through much of eastern Montana and the following season the ranchers of the southwest were burned out by heat and an almost total lack of moisture. After some better years in the late 1920's, much of the state was plunged once again into drought in the early 1930's and many locales sadly reported the near complete failures of crops and livestock in the brutal and searing summers of 1934 and 1936.

Making matters worse were macro changes in the national and global economy during the period which reduced the relative value of many of Montana's resources but increased the costs of necessary manufactured goods and services.[27] Again, this third factor was most painfully experienced in the farm sector where the value of farm land, food crops, and livestock spiraled downward from their World War I peaks. Wheat prices, for example, collapsed from $3.30 a bushel early in 1920 to $1.40 a year later. After a few years of modest improvement in the late 1920's came the renewed pessimism and panic of the Great Depression. In particular, the copper mining industry in the state was devastated by the Depression as copper prices plunged from around 20 cents per pound in 1929 to a nickel per pound in 1933. The globalization of the industry also accelerated, enabling cheaper South American and African copper to make the Montana producers less competitive.

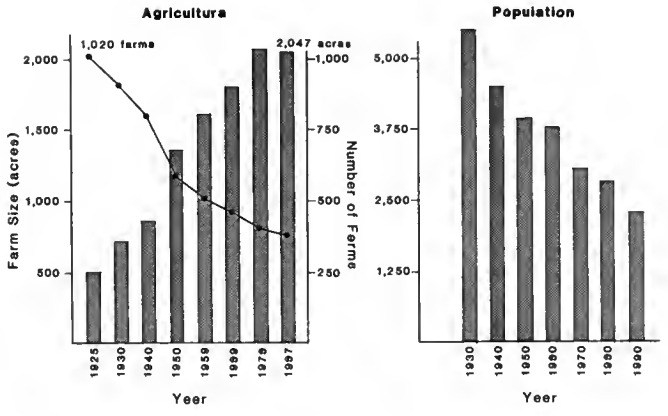
Finally, the tide of technological change turned during this period. In earlier years, technological innovations often made possible the initial occupance and subsequent exploitation of an area which in turn encouraged population gains. Increasingly after 1920, however, the effect of technological innovation was to substitute capital and equipment for labor in already-settled areas.[28] Thus, workers in traditional industries often became unnecessary and new capital-intensive economic activities, such as energy and forest products, proved to be only modest stimulants to employment.

The economic, demographic, and social impacts of this changed calculus of influences were clear and unambiguous.[29] Between 1920 and 1926 over half of all of Montana's commercial banks failed. Many eastern counties in particular witnessed the mass collapse of one bank after another as thousands of farms went bankrupt between 1919 and 1925. The focus of economic pain spread statewide by the early 1930's. Thousands of unemployed miners and industrial workers in Butte, Anaconda, Great Falls, and Helena watched helplessly as copper production plunged 90 percent between 1929 and 1933.

Even though the growing presence of the federal government during the New Deal years mitigated these economic disasters, the population impacts were striking and sustained.[30] On the eastern plains, the fleeting bounty of the teens was replaced by the abandoned farms and dying towns of the 1920's and 1930's. Eastern Montana's Daniels County serves as an example to illustrate the local impacts of these converging forces. The number of farms in the county fell by almost half between 1920 and 1950 while average farm size rose

from 500 acres to approximately 1,400 acres. The county was broadly representative of the larger agro-demographic transformation occurring in many areas (Figure 16).[31] As the frontier era closed and families matured, the numbers of surplus laborers rose without

Figure 16
The Agro-Demographic Transformation: Daniels County, 1925-1990



Source: U.S. Census

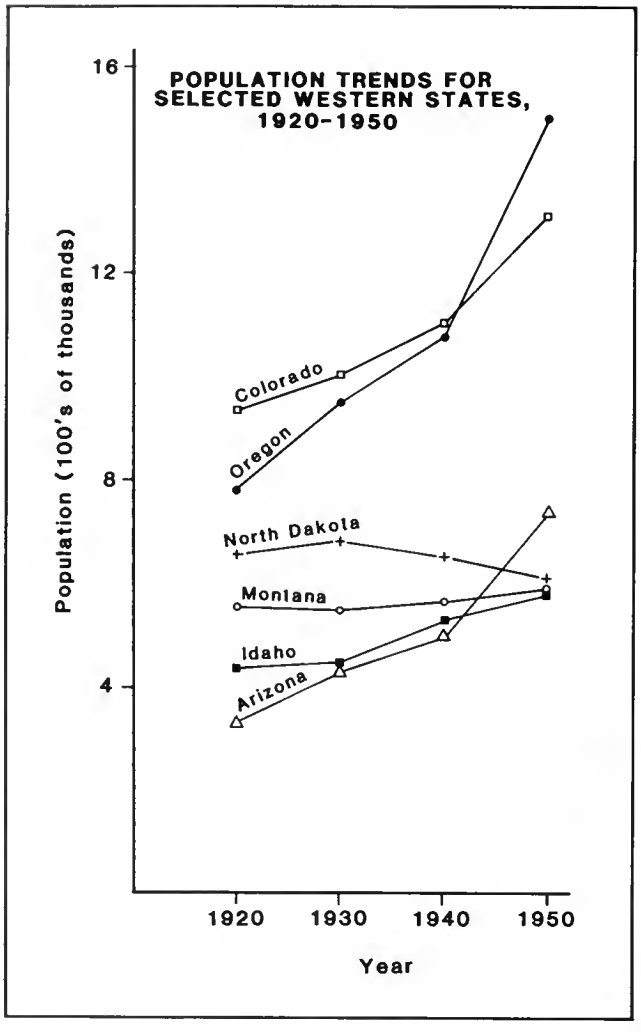
an accompanying increase in new farm land. The drought and low prices added further fuel to the fire. As the marginal farms failed, they were consolidated into larger units. Successful operators also were more prone to mechanize their larger farms. The consequences for the area's population geography were apparent. Supporting well over 5,000 residents in 1930, the county's subsequent trend reveals the classic aging population profile and sustained outmigration that continues to plague many portions of rural America today.

Overall, eastern Montana's population remained about unchanged between 1920 and 1950, but the Daniels County example suggests some important internal shifts masked by the overall totals. Actually, the rural eastern counties posted real losses of over 30,000 persons between 1920 and 1950. The focus of virtually all the population growth in eastern Montana occurred in Cascade and Yellowstone counties which together added 40,000 persons to the region's total. While only a modest increase in a thirty-year period, the pattern suggested that job creation in the urban settings of Great Falls and Billings selectively diminished the predilections for outmigration which were obviously compelling in the stricken rural counties.

In western Montana, the situation became more complex between 1920 and 1950 as the area adjusted to changes in the national and global economy. The population picture was a mosaic of gains and losses as differential demands for western resources created distinctive impacts on employment in particular localities. Not surprisingly, Silver Bow County experienced the greatest population decline in response to the severe economic downturn of the Depression and to longer term technological and structural shifts in the copper industry. The county's population fell by almost 12,000 between 1920 and 1950. Elsewhere, largely rural and agriculturally-based counties such as Beaverhead and Madison also stagnated, to some degree echoing the pattern of rural eastern Montana. Numerous locations supporting modest population growth guaranteed that western Montana actually gained about 35,000 people in the period. Growth in government services, education, trade, and the late spurt in forest products produced employment opportunities in counties such as Gallatin, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, and Flathead.[32] Still, the entire era hardly was comparable to the robust economic and settlement expansions in eastern and western Montana before 1920.

It is useful to place the state into a larger regional context during this "Era of Adjustment and Accommodation." Population change in a selection of western states suggests two distinctive patterns (Figure 17). Colorado, Oregon, and Arizona are indicative of one pattern in which modest population growth between 1920 and 1935 accelerated markedly thereafter with the help of economic expansion and increased in-migration. The reasons for these patterns were diverse and were related to favorable trends in urbanization, a combination of resource- and amenity-related growth, and accelerated levels of wartime and post-war investments in manufacturing.[33] Montana's relatively stagnant population trends, however, conformed more closely to a second type of western state exemplified by North Dakota and, to a lesser extent, Idaho. Certainly Montana's rural eastern declines paralleled similar patterns across much of the agricultural Great Plains, as suggested by the North Dakota trend. In a different fashion, Idaho's mix of agriculture and mining-related industries conformed broadly to Montana's economic profile. None of these states witnessed the same spectacular convergence of greatly increased government spending, favorably perceived climates, and blossoming urban infrastructure typical of the fast-growth states. Given Montana's pre-1920 economy, its relative isolation, and the only incipient appreciation of its environmental amenities, it is hardly surprising that the Treasure State passed through the era with a minimum of population growth.

Figure 17
Population Trends for Selected Western States, 1920-1950



Source: U.S. Census

The Era of Renewed Growth: 1950-1980

The period between 1950 and 1980 produced higher population growth in several areas of the state. Montana's population rose by almost 200,000 residents with two-thirds of that net growth accounted for by the western third of the state (Figure 7).

The ever capricious western environment lived up to its reputation but dealt no numbing blows as it had in the late teens or dirty thirties. Notable droughts struck portions of the state in the mid- and late-1950's and once again in the early 1970's but the brevity of the episodes and the declining numbers of Montanans directly engaged in agriculture diminished the population impacts of the dry periods.

Sizable though declining portions of the economy remained dependent on an assortment of unpredictable commodities, each with their cyclical price fluctuations that alternately spurred and slowed job creation and population changes.[34] Both the farm and mining sectors saw continuing volatility in the demand for their products. They also both experienced ongoing globalization of their industries. Technological changes in these sectors strongly favored less demand for labor and those areas highly dependent on these resources often saw fewer new jobs and declining or stagnant populations. Butte's shift, for example, to open-pit mining proved much less labor intensive than the earlier underground mining technologies.

Some resource-based activities, however, witnessed significant expansion after 1950. A growing and diversifying forest products industry, for instance, spurred population gains in Missoula, Mineral, Lake, Flathead, and Ravalli counties (Figure 18).[35] Energy-related jobs contributed to selective growth elsewhere. The

Figure 18
Western Montana Lumber Company, Missoula, 1953
Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Photo Archives, Helena

Williston Basin discoveries in the early 1950's, new gas finds in north-central Montana in the 1960's, and the expansions at Colstrip late in that decade produced

important local and regional benefits, but the relatively low labor requirements in the industry and the historically fickle prices for these commodities dampened any hopes that energy was about to rewrite the population history of the state.[36]

One area of persistent employment growth involved the federal government. Designated national park and forest service lands, reclamation projects, and Indian reservations all required significant federal employment and investment. Federally-sponsored dam and highway construction and oscillating commitments by the Department of Defense also had their distinctive impacts on particular localities.

Finally, changing American cultural attitudes cast many of Montana's environmental amenities in an ever more positive light and these shifts impacted selected zones, especially in the western portion of the state. After the war, Montana became an increasingly important destination for tourists, hunters, fishing enthusiasts, retirees, and residents who valued the accessibility to outdoor activities and a high quality of life. Actually, the growth in Montana's amenity sector was quite modest compared to many other western states between 1950 and 1980 but these shifts towards leisure and life style considerations still had real impacts on the state's population geography. Some non metropolitan counties in the state which had stagnant or declining populations for decades saw positive turnarounds in the 1970's. Some of the shifts can certainly be attributed to these cultural and amenity variables, which attracted a variety of relatively footloose, often entrepreneurial individuals.[37]

Regionally, eastern and western Montana continued to display distinctive personalities in terms of patterns of population change. In the east, Yellowstone and Cascade counties added 80,000 residents and again accounted for virtually all of the growth in that portion of the state. Their gains balanced the frequent small declines that continued to characterize rural counties such as Blaine, Toole, Sheridan, and Carbon. In western Montana, there was a similarly variable range in the record of gains and losses, but modest population growth proved to be more widespread than in the east. Conversely, the number of declining counties was limited, but was exemplified in two cases by sizable losses in mining-oriented Silver Bow and Deer Lodge counties. Clearly, no single factor explained the gains in counties such as Gallatin, Missoula, Flathead, and Lewis and Clark. Relatively young populations with higher incomes in these areas combined with favorable geographies of modest employment opportunities in selected resource-related, public services, amenity, tourism, and retirement sectors to account for the increases.

The Post—1980 Pattern

Since 1980 Montana's modest growth of the earlier period has been replaced by another era of stagnation (Figure 7). Over two-thirds of Montana's 56 counties lost population and the state's struggling economy since 1980 prompted over 50,000 residents to leave.[38] Even when considering the rate of natural increase over the past decade, the state's census population rose by an anemic 13,000 persons to approximately 800,000. Still, there was considerable diversity between and even within Montana's regions (Table 1). Many agricultural counties in eastern Montana continued to show slow population decreases, often 5 to 15 percent for the decade. Making matters worse were downturns in energy-related industries which adversely affected the population picture in Fallon, Dawson, and Richland counties, among others. Even Cascade and Yellowstone counties failed to add strength to the picture: the two combined added less than 2,500 residents in the 1980's. The few bright spots in the east included Glacier, Roosevelt, and Big Horn counties where population growth and improved census counts on Indian reservations boosted the totals.

Western Montana provided a more complex mosaic but even here population growth was slow at best between 1980 and 1990. Deer Lodge and Silver Bow continued to lose population, extending a trend over half-a-century old. The two counties lost another 6,000 residents or about 12 percent of their population, an ongoing and painful adjustment for localities with a legacy of dependence on an unpredictable and ultimately ebbing resource economy. Less dramatic but paralleling this pattern were the stagnant and declining populations recorded for the lumber and forest products counties of Lincoln, Sanders, and Mineral. Earlier positive demand and price trends for these products reversed in the 1980's, producing slowdowns that are still being experienced in the region today. Elsewhere the fast-growing counties of the 1950-1980 era continued to grow albeit at often lower rates. Specialized small-scale manufacturing enterprises provided some new employment in the western valley settings. Tourism expanded in many of these areas although more slowly than in other western states. Selective cutbacks in federal spending in the 1980's also had their impacts in a part of the state where much of the land is still controlled by the government. Recent mining expansions in Jefferson and Stillwater counties affected local communities in these areas but the small, real gains in resident popula-

tions could hardly offset the large state trends toward decline and stagnation.

Table 1

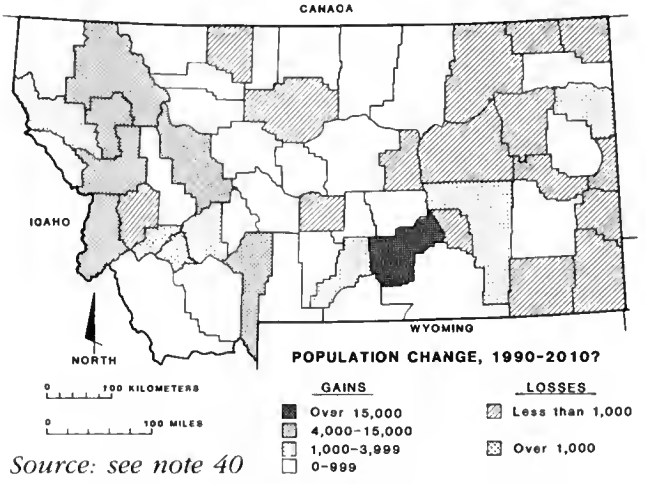
Montana Population Change, by county, 1980-1990
Source: U.S. Census of 1980 and U.S. Census of 1990, Public Law 94-171 File, Montana

County	1980	1990	Change
Beaverhead	8,186	8,424	+238
Bighorn	11,096	11,337	+241
Blaine	6,999	6,728	-271
Broadwater	3,267	3,318	+51
Carbon	8,099	8.080	-9
Carter	1,799	1,503	-296
Cascade	80,696	77,691	-3,005
Chouteau	6,092	5,452	-640
Custer	13,109	11,697	-1,412
Daniels	2,835	2,266	-569
Dawson	11,805	9,505	-2,300
Deer Lodge	12,518	10,278	-2,240
Fallon	3,763	3,103	-660
Fergus	13,076	12,83	-993
Flathead	51,966	59,218	+7,252
Gallatin	42,865	50,463	+7,598
Garfield	1,656	1,589	-67
Glacier	10,628	12,121	+1,463
Golden Valley	1,026	912	-114
Granite	2,70	2,548	-152
Hill	17,985	17,654	-331
Jefferson	7,029	7,939	+910
Judith Basin	2,646	2,282	-364
Lake	19,056	21,041	+1,985
Lewis and Clark	43,039	47,495	+4,456
Liberty	2,329	2,295	-34
Lincoln	17,752	17,481	-271
McCone	2,702	2,276	-426
Madison	5,448	5,989	+541
Meagher	2,154	1m819	-335
Mineral	3,675	3,315	-360
Missoula	76,016	78,687	+2,671
Musselshell	4,428	4,106	-322
Park	12,660	14,562	+1,902
Petroleum	655	519	-136
Phillips	5,367	5,163	-204
Pondera	6,731	6,433	-298
Powder River	2,520	2,090	-430
Powell	6,958	6,620	-338
Prairie	1,836	1,383	-453
Ravalli	22,493	25,010	+2,517
Richland	12,243	10,716	-1,527
Roosevelt	10,467	10,999	+532
Rosebud	9,899	10,505	+606
Sanders	8,675	8,669	-6
Sheridan	5,414	4,732	-682
Silver Bow	38,092	33,941	-4,151
Stillwater	5,598	6,536	+938
Sweet Grass	3,216	3,154	-62
Teton	6,491	6,271	-220
Toole	5,559	5,046	-513
Treasure	981	874	-107
Valley	10,250	8,239	-2,011
Wheatland	2,359	2,246	-113
Wibaux	1,476	1,191	-285
Yellowstone	108,035	113,419	+5,384

Implications

Montana's historical patterns of population change suggest the difficulties in predicting future trends. Before the 1990 Census was taken, the U.S. Department of Commerce predicted that Montana's 2010 population could range from anywhere between 692,000 and 969,000 residents.[39] More detailed county estimates of population change were provided by NPA Data Services in 1989 (Figure 19).[40] Overall, NPA Data Services' estimates may be optimistic in light of the actual 1990

Figure 19
Population Change, 1990-2010?



Source: see note 40

census totals. Still, the assessment they provide, based on recent changes and on the distinctive demographic structure of each county, reflect likely trends for the future. Whether any of these particular predictions come about or not, four essential implications emerge from an analysis of past trends.

Firstly, physical geography matters. Although Montanans are undoubtedly more knowledgeable and realistic settlers in the 1990's than in the 1930's, the

vagaries and constraints of the state's resource base still must be reckoned with in the future. The geography of drought still will intermittently envelop the state, especially the eastern plains. True, evolving technologies of agriculture have reduced the potential demographic impacts of a capricious environment in that sector, but the larger consequences of western aridity will continue to provoke conflict between agricultural, industrial, recreational, and residential populations. In addition, the prospects for "water grabs" from other western states will almost inevitably increase in the next century. Concurrently, the state's population geography will continue to be impacted by other resource-related variables, including the unpredictable national and global demand for the state's metals, energy, and lumber, the depletion rates of these resources, and the locations and amounts of new resource finds in the future.

Secondly, the state remains an isolated place. Although the communications revolution has brought obvious advantages, it still costs more time and more money to get people and products to and from Montana. The state remains well removed from the nation's principal population clusters, both to the east and the west. Major national corridors of rail, truck, and air traffic are also focused elsewhere and probably will remain so. The consequences of space and of distance can be diminished, but they cannot be eliminated and they will continue to exert a powerful force upon the state's economy and related patterns of population change.

Thirdly, the historical record strongly suggests that sharp regional differences in population change will persist within the state. Demographically, the "Last Best Place" is really many places, each with their disparate population histories. The overall statewide totals might show population stability over the next 25 years, but the lessons of the last half century are clear: locally dramatic shifts in population, both in gains and in losses, are quite likely. Given recent trends, eastern Montana will continue slowly to lose its population dominance to the western third of the state. Most difficult to predict for the east are the long-term implications of the volatile energy sector and the related manufacturing and service economies in Billings and other smaller urban centers. For western Montana, counties that remain closely bound to natural resource economies such as lumbering and mining will be inherently volatile and prone to further declines while the larger valleys that enjoy greater diversification into tourism, services, and government employment will be more likely to retain and increase their population. Local differences, however, may be quite pronounced and related to the distinctive economic bases and age profiles of different counties.

A fourth point which follows from the third is that government officials, planners, and investors must be sensitive to the regional variety in the state. A "statewide" approach to the population issue is therefore dubious if it fails to recognize that the historical diversity in the state's environment and economic base has produced unique sets of local circumstances that require distinctive understanding. A couple of specific observations, however, may be useful. Significant growth, where it occurs, will continue to be quite geographically concentrated in a relatively few counties. Some of the western valleys and Yellowstone County can be identified as likely candidates for larger increases. One set of challenges will be to manage effectively these pockets of concentrated growth where they do occur. Another set of challenges will be to address the geographically broader and quite diverse set of counties experiencing stagnant or declining populations. They may well include aging mining counties, long-declining agricultural counties, and cyclically vulnerable forest products and energy resource areas. What should our goal be in such settings? Is it desirable or possible to reverse such long-standing trends where they occur? The historical view suggests we should have a healthy skepticism for simple solutions when they are offered by politicians, planners or developers.

Ultimately, these questions focus on a central issue: how will future patterns of population-change impact the quality of life in the state? Obviously, different persons will respond in different ways to this question. An unemployed forest products worker in Lincoln County may well rue the loss of jobs in his/her part of the state while the wilderness outfitter might welcome visitors but hate to see too many greenhorns peopling the wide open spaces. Does the state need a level of population stability or growth to guarantee a higher quality of life? How much growth can an area tolerate before the quality of life declines? Can a high quality of life be maintained or enhanced in areas losing population? Living in the "Last Best Place" requires that these difficult questions be confronted. The changing historical picture reminds us to be humble as we do so, but Montana's diverse and glorious geography also reminds us that it is worth doing so.

Acknowledgements: *I wish to thank the Montana Historical Society, the Montana State University Library, and the Montana Census and Economic Information Center for their assistance. Special thanks to Robert Taylor, Department of Earth Sciences, Montana State University, for use of manuscript maps of Indian reservations and railroad patterns.*

Endnotes

1. Excellent statewide histories include Michael P. Malone and Richard B., Roeder's *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (University of Washington Press, 1988) and the still useful Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole, ed., A History of Montana (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1952).
2. Population change figures were calculated from the 1940 and 1990 *Census of Population.*
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4. Donald Worster, "New West, True West: Interpreting the Region's History," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18(1987): 145-150.
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6. See Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (W.W. Norton, 1987) and William G. Robbins, "The 'Plundered Province' Thesis and Recent Historiography of the American West," *Pacific Historical Review* 55(1986): 595-597.
7. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Ginn and Co., 1931).
8. John R. Borchert, *America's Northern Heartland* (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp.79-84.
9. See Michael Malone's recent overview of the role of the federal government in the West in "Beyond the Last Frontier: Toward a New Approach to Western American History," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20(1989): 409-427. Also, see Gerald Nash's three volumes on the West, *The American West in the Twentieth Century* (Prentice-Hall, 1973), *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Indiana University Press, 1985), and *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (University of Nebraska Press, 1990).
10. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Yale University Press, 1975).
11. Borchert, America's Northern Heartland, 129-130, 192.
12. Modern counties defined as "western" were Beaverhead, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Flathead, Gallatin, Granite, Jefferson, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Madison, Mineral, Missoula, Powell, Ravalli, Sanders, and Silver Bow. All other modern counties were classified as "eastern." Historical data were based on similar earlier configurations of county boundaries.
13. An overview of initial settlement geography is provided by W.K. Wyckoff and D.R. Lageson, "The Eastward-Migrating Frontier: Mining Development and Settlement of Western and Central Montana During the Late Nineteenth Century," *Centennial Field Conference Guidebook,* Montana Geological Society, 1989, pp. 5-18. Another useful perspective on settlement expansion is provided by John A. Alwin, "Post Office Locations and the Historical Geographer: A Montana Example," The Professional Geographer 26(1974): 183-6.
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